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THE PRINCETON SEMINARY BULLETIN

VOLUME XVIII NUMBER 3 NEW SERIES 1997

COMMENCEMENT 1997

On Accepting Responsibility

THOMAS W. GILLESPIE

Taking Every Thought Captive to Obey Christ

DONALD H. JUEL

"All Generations Will Call Me Blessed":

Mary in Biblical and Ecumenical Perspective

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WARFIELD LECTURE

"Aminadab's Chariot":

The Predicament of Biblical Interpretation

KARLFRIED FROEHLICH

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On Accepting Responsibility

by THOMAS W. GILLESPIE

FAREWELL REMARKS TO THE CLASS OF 1997 BY THE
PRESIDENT OF THE SEMINARY

COMMENTING editorially on Pope John Paul II's 1993 letter to the Roman Catholic bishops entitled "The Splendor of Truth," James Q. Wilson writes in the *San Diego Union-Tribune*:

Many people find philosophy boring and theology frightening. They would rather read the comics. And so would I: I can't imagine starting a day without studying "Calvin and Hobbes." But whether we notice it or not, that comic strip is often about the fundamental moral issue of our time.

Here is a little boy (implausibly given the name of a stern Protestant theologian) asserting that what he wants—fame, luxury, diversion, staying out of school, hitting Susie with a snowball—is all that should matter. I am the center of the universe, he says; values are what I say they are.

And then there is the tiger (paradoxically given the name of an English philosopher who pretty much defended the little boy's view) who offers the sober judgment of [humanity] about this self-centeredness, all in the language of gentle irony.

Periodically, just to prove that [humanity] is in charge, not little boys, Hobbes beats upon Calvin. And periodically, just to prove that the life of a solitary egoist is inadequate, Calvin blissfully nuzzles the tiger's fur.

This may seem an odd introduction to an essay on a papal encyclical. But it is a matter of the highest importance to discover the grounds for our belief that Calvin is usually wrong and Hobbes is almost always right.¹

One aspect of "the fundamental moral issue of our time," as Wilson puts it, comes to expression in the following "Calvin and Hobbes" strip by cartoonist Bill Watterson. In the first frame, while trudging through the snow, Calvin declares to Hobbes, "Nothing I do is my fault." In frame two the little boy stops to explain, "My family is dysfunctional and my parents won't empower me! Consequently, I'm not self-actualized!" Frame three depicts Calvin in a pious pose as he continues his explanation, "My behavior is addictive,

¹ (Monday, November 29, 1993).

functioning in a diseased process of toxic codependency! I need holistic healing and wellness before I'll accept any responsibility for my actions!" The final frame has Calvin stomping off triumphantly as he declares, "I love the culture of victimhood." To which Hobbes replies, "One of us needs to stick his head in a bucket of ice water."

The moral issue posed here by little Calvin, unfortunately, is not limited to him in particular or to little boys in general. According to Charles J. Sykes, portraying oneself as a victim has become "an attractive pastime" in American society today. It is so pervasive, he argues, that it suggests not merely a passing fad but rather a "fundamental transformation of American cultural values and notions of character and personal responsibility." This perspective explains the title of his book, *A Nation of Victims: The Decay of the American Character*.² Victimism is a character problem, Sykes contends, because it is not a form of idealism but rather "an ideology of the ego." It is, he says, "a generalized cultural impulse to deny personal responsibility and to obsess on the grievances of the insatiable self." At bottom, it is "a habit of mind."³

My prayer for you, the Princeton Theological Seminary Class of 1997, is that you have developed here and will continue to develop a different habit of mind—a theological habit of mind. I trust you know and believe today, at a level far deeper and more expansive than when you began here, that you are created by God, loved by God, redeemed by God, forgiven by God, reconciled to God, called by God, and *accountable* to God in Jesus Christ. Such knowledge and belief, such a habit of mind, frees you to accept responsibility for your life before God. More specifically, it frees you to accept responsibility for the ministry to which you have been called.

Those of you who are going from here into pastoral ministry will need to step up and accept responsibility for the state of the local church you will serve, as well as that of the larger communion of which you are a part. You are not responsible for the church as you find it. People of my generation are responsible for its current condition. Across the years and in our ministries we have contributed to many of its problems. We have done the best we knew how, and that is far from perfection. But remember, the church we inherited from our forebears in ministry was not perfect either. Just as we accepted responsibility for the church of the fifties and sixties and seventies, so now it is your turn to accept responsibility for the church as it moves into a new millennium.

Those of you who are going on for further theological education will be

² (New York: St. Martin's, 1992).

³ *Ibid.*, xiii, 22.

challenged to accept responsibility for theological reflection and understanding. You are not responsible for the current state of theology. But you are responsible for what you do with the tradition of scholarship that will be turned over to you in due season. Accept that responsibility—for scholarship in service to the church of Jesus Christ and for the church such scholarship seeks to serve.

I find it interesting that the word “responsibility” does not occur in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. But the idea is there. Matthew’s Gospel records the story Jesus told of the householder who, before going on a journey, distributed his wealth among three servants and made them responsible for their individual portion. Upon the householder’s return, the servants were asked for an account of their stewardship. Two heard the householder say in response to their report, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” But the third, the one who buried his portion because he feared losing it, heard these words, “You wicked and slothful servant!” (25:14–30). Ministry is a responsibility, and it entails accountability.

The apostle Paul knew this well. In his First Letter to the Corinthians, he reminds the congregation of his initial missionary visit to them, how he laid a foundation upon which others were now building (3:10–11). Then, he adds these sober and sobering words: “Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done” (3:12–13). Paul knew about ministerial accountability.

There is great joy in the Christian ministry and much satisfaction in the task of Christian theology. But both are more than mere “fun and games.” And neither allows for victimism as “a habit of mind.”

Your task is to become a counter-culture of responsible women and men. Serve Jesus Christ to the very best of your ability. When you make mistakes, as you will, correct them. When you experience failure, as you will, recover from it. When you know success, as you will, be grateful for it. But in all things accept responsibility for the task to which God is calling you, and be prepared to give an account of your stewardship of the gospel.

Taking Every Thought Captive to Obey Christ

by DONALD H. JUEL

Donald H. Juel, the Richard J. Dearborn Professor of New Testament Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, preached this sermon at Princeton Seminary's Baccalaureate Service, held at Nassau Presbyterian Church on May 18, 1997.

Texts: Isaiah 55:6-11

2 Corinthians 10:1-5

Words, words, words, I'm so sick of words.

Words all day through, first from him, now from you.

Is that all you blackguards can do?

ELIZA DOOLITTLE'S song to her ne'er-do-well admirer who does nothing but talk may well have been yours at some point over the last three (or more) years. Congratulations. You've sloshed through the sea of verbiage and made it to the other shore. Special sympathies go out to the graduating Ph.D.'s who've had to endure not only the endless stream of words from professors and books but hundreds of pages of their own academic prose.

Why so many words? You'd think we could do with less. When it takes 800 pages of commentary to deal with Paul's seven-page letter to the Thessalonians, something is wrong. The Word of God may be drowned in a sea of tired explanation. And if what's behind it all is the love of God, Eliza's demand seems likewise apt: "Don't talk of love, show me!"

You've studied enough, however, to know that language isn't trivial. Blood has been spilled over words. Shall we say the Spirit "proceeds from the Father and the Son," or is "from the Father" enough? Christendom was divided and lives lost over that dispute. Questions today about using "Father" for God may prove as divisive and hurtful. On the other hand, the lesson for this Pentecost Sunday tells what occurred when the disciples were clothed with power from on high: they spoke, and they changed the world forever. Peter preached a sermon with ordinary words, and thousands altered the way they lived. The scattered people of God were united through the medium of language, as they had been scattered through the confusion of tongues (Acts 2:1-11; cf. Gen 11:1-9).

Paul, at least, was aware of the power of language. In writing his letters, and as we may imagine, in preaching his sermons, he could describe himself as a

warrior, with words and arguments as his weapons:

Indeed, we live as human beings, but we do not wage war according to human standards; for the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ (2 Cor. 10:3-5; NRSV).

The battle language may make you uneasy—perhaps because you already know that life is a battle and would prefer to escape. But you can't. We are deeply involved in a war of words, and what's at stake is more than spending habits. Words are not neutral. They will be used to create life or to impair it. Language will be employed to build up the body of Christ, or it will serve to wall people off from God and from one another. Most of you are aware of how destructive language can be. You know that if you say to children, "You're really stupid," they'll believe it. You're aware that enough dismissive comments will shame all but the strongest into silence. It is genuinely disheartening how many capable, eager students have become calculating and suspicious because they have been hurt by pastors or CPE supervisors or professors supposedly interested in their "formation" and "education." I'm not surprised some are troubled with the language of battle and the image of arguments as weapons. But we are engaged in a struggle, and it is absolutely crucial to know that language has the power to give life as well as to destroy it and that within the ordinary realm of human speech, someone is doing battle for us.

If you take nothing else from this place, I would hope it is some sense of the promising words we call the gospel. The message is not complicated. It's a way of saying that God has made a decision about you, that the Creator of all things has had you in mind since before the foundation of the world, has paid a high price for your well-being, and that in the preaching of the crucified and risen Christ—by which I mean the words we preach—God has come to touch you with a loving presence that promises life.

What requires work is understanding why that is so difficult to grasp—and so difficult to speak. Perhaps, it is the one thing we cannot afford to hear. The real scandal of God's word is not the news that God expects justice. People have a sense of that even if they don't do it. The scandal is that God is gracious—lavishly, carelessly, dangerously gracious. God is not careful to divide the worthy and the unworthy. Jesus got into trouble because he touched lepers and healed unclean women and forgave sins on his own

authority. The religious and political authorities recognized a force in him that they could not regulate and control. And they did what they needed to do to protect themselves and those for whom they were responsible.

It's the grace of God that is unsettling—a graciousness that won't be bounded by law. Being touched by that free, unmerited grace of God—to use an image from Flannery O'Connor—can feel like being bitten by a snake. As you feel that love of God coursing through your veins, you can sense that something is dying as well as being born; you recognize you are no longer your own. Jesus burst into the life of a blind man, and when he really saw the world, parts of his life were blown to pieces. The same thing happened to Paul. After his encounter with the risen Christ, he spent the rest of his life trying to gather up the fragments of his shattered certainties and form them into a new mosaic. Such promise can feel like a threat for those whose world is neatly divided between the responsible and the irresponsible, for whom the rules and the goals are clear. The gospel can be as threatening for those who have come to rely on the fire of resentment for motivation, or who can only relate to others as victims and can't dare imagine anything more for fear of disappointment.

For all such people the gospel is the thing to fear. That liberating presence of God's love is the only thing that can set them free and give them life—but they can't afford to let it near. Your call is to bring that gospel near by speaking the presence of God into their reluctant ears through words—ordinary words—that will find their way into the darkest corners of bound imaginations.

In this sense, you are called to destroy strongholds, those flimsy intellectual structures within which people live, believing they're safe. There is—fortunately—no safe place in that sense, no place where you can hide from God, who has searched and known you. And it is precisely in encountering that God who has always had you in mind that you will discover there is nothing to fear, no flame of resentment that cannot be quenched, no sin that cannot be forgiven. If you're to experience that sense of freedom and liberation, however, someone must speak God's presence into the silence that encases you. And this can be done—even with ordinary words. Someone can give you a taste of the Lord's goodness with something as simple as bread and wine. And you can do the same.

Sometimes all you have to do is speak. In my first class here at Princeton some years ago, I read Galatians 3:28 in class: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male and female." A Roman Catholic woman in the

class who had never heard that passage believed it. She left the church of her parents and grandparents, became an Episcopalian, and was ordained as a priest. She was, I believe, the first woman to become a Navy chaplain in the Episcopal church. It frightened the daylights out of me to think that people might actually believe and act on what they heard in class!

Sometimes the speaking requires art. A pastor I know told of a visit by parents who wanted their child baptized. Though they were not members, he agreed to do the baptism, provided they spent some time talking about baptism and faith. While going through the baptismal service, the unchurched father objected. "I can't promise all those things for my child," he said. "I'm not sure I believe." "This is your lucky day," the pastor told him. "God has a special fondness precisely for people like you who can't believe and aren't sure." And he told him of Abraham and Jacob and Moses—and Jesus, who welcomed sinners. The father, accustomed to hearing judgment, was simply swept off his feet. Now, he comes to church regularly, fully expecting to hear a message of good news that is particularly for him.

Sometimes preaching the gospel requires daring. In a rural parish was a pious old man named John. He was convinced he had committed some grievous sin and could not forgive himself. Most people in the congregation couldn't even remember what he did, but the old man could not forget. He ceased taking communion because he knew he was unworthy. At first, members of his family ignored his behavior, convinced he'd get over it. He didn't—and the longer he harbored the sense of inadequacy, the more impossible he became. He seemed to shrivel before people's eyes, and a poison worked its way through the whole family. The pastor knew all about this and had talked to John about the mercy of God, but it didn't change anything. On communion Sundays, the old man sat pathetically in his seat, unmoved and unmoving.

One Sunday, he seemed resolved to change. He stood up when it was time to come forward for communion. The pastor saw it out of the corner of his eye. But then John lost his nerve and sat down. The pastor hiked up his robe, stepped over the altar railing, and made right for John. He gave him a small piece of bread: "This is the body of Christ, given for you." He did the same with the little glass of wine: "This is the blood of Christ shed for you." The pastor had wandered out of his appointed area, had trespassed, ignoring all the signs and intruding into the life of a sad old man. But that daring act broke the old man wide open.

Many students do not like that story. It sounds too intrusive, too aggressive.

It seems more appropriate that we should wait for people to discover their need—then we'll have something for them. I can picture churches all over the world with pastors and teachers waiting quietly for crises to bring in people. That is not what Paul is speaking about, and it is not the ministry to which you are called. God has never waited for an invitation. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners, and God burst open the tomb in which people tried to keep such graciousness sealed away. The whole point of the Bible story is that our God is one who seeks out the lost and the fearful and the hopeless—like the first couple we meet in the Bible, hiding from God in the tall weeds.

You should not confuse such willingness to intrude with sheer aggressiveness. Paul opens his speech by entreating the Corinthians “by the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:1). If you really do understand your ministry as taking every thought captive in obedience to Christ, if you think of your ministry as a creative effort to find a way to speak the reality of God into the well-defended imaginations of those around you, you will be tempted at some point to use cunning and violence when your words don't seem to be enough. You will discover soon, if you haven't already, that some people won't agree with you—even your gentle, thoughtful ministering won't bring them around. You'll find there is no firm ground on which to stand to defend your ideas against a committed postmodernist, no rock from which to launch a successful attack against a stubborn fundamentalist, no single unmoving point from which to hang your whole theological enterprise. And when you make the discovery that you do not finally have control, you will be tempted by cunning and violence either to deceive cleverly or to find some vulnerable point in your conversation partners and inflict pain until they surrender.

That's the way it is among the gentiles, Jesus told his followers. It shall not be so among you. The only weapons you have are the word and the sacraments, prayer and persistence. The promise of the gospel is that you can afford to trust them. God's work can be done through the most ordinary words, spoken at the right time. Even a sprinkle of water or a bit of ordinary bread and wine will do the trick. The art of your ministry—and the fun—will be to learn how and when to speak. It should include dispensing with tired images and finding a new language for the faith—as the psalmist says, singing a new song. The worst thing is not to make a mistake; there are others, who will be singing with you, whom you can trust to tell you when you're off key or when you've lost the rhythm. The most serious failing is to avoid trying something new and interesting—to make of the gospel something safe and tedious and boring.

One of you challenged me not long ago: Show me a congregation and

pastor where the Word of God is alive. I must admit I hesitated a bit. There are many churches where preaching and worship have domesticated the gospel and have robbed it of its power. There are places you can worship where there is not a promising word to be heard. I recognize that many my age have been worn down by a cynical world and do not believe there is any promise in words. They have come to rely on their personality and charm. But that is not enough. I know many of you. You're witty and charming. But that isn't enough. You can do better.

So I appeal to you by the mercies of God to speak. Yet you ought not to talk before you listen. The gospel is always a word spoken to particular people, not to people in general. And there are things to learn about people, like the ways they have been hardened by life and have learned to defend themselves against the grace of God. You cannot listen eternally, however; words finally need to be spoken—and not by preachers who are concerned simply to safeguard what has been entrusted to them. You can learn much from the host of witnesses by whom you are surrounded—but such learning is for bold actions, like destroying strongholds and intruding into lives where God is silent in order to set loose that word by which God frees and gives life.

So learn from Paul not simply to talk about experience; be one. Don't be afraid to venture into any imaginative world to take thoughts captive to obey Christ. There is no place where God has not prepared the way. And when the time is right, with all meekness and gentleness and artfulness, speak—for the word you speak originates in the mouth of God, who promises that “it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (Isa. 55:11; NRSV).

"All Generations Will Call Me Blessed": Mary in Biblical and Ecumenical Perspective

by BEVERLY ROBERTS GAVENTA

Beverly Roberts Gaventa is the Helen H. P. Manson Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at Princeton Theological Seminary. She gave this address in Miller Chapel on September 30, 1996, at the Ecumenical Convocation sponsored jointly by the Seminary and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Trenton.

IN MAY OF 1995, Pope John Paul II issued an encyclical letter on commitment to ecumenism. The letter, *Ut unum sint* ("That They May be One"), anticipates the new millennium and eloquently calls for a renewed effort to bring about full communion among the churches. The encyclical also frankly acknowledges important differences among the churches and identifies five such areas in which ecumenical study is urgently needed: (1) the relationship between scripture ("the highest authority in matters of faith") and tradition ("indispensable to the interpretation of the Word of God"); (2) the character of the eucharist as sacrificial memorial and the Real Presence of Christ; (3) ordination to the threefold ministry of the episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate; (4) the Magisterium or teaching office of the church entrusted to the Pope and the Bishops; and, (5) Mary as "Mother of God and Icon of the Church, the spiritual Mother who intercedes for Christ's disciples and for all humanity."¹

As a Protestant considering this appeal for dialogue, and the particular issues the encyclical identifies for study, what I confront is the raging diversity among Protestants. In a number of quarters, biblical authority itself—that hallmark of Protestantism—is in jeopardy—both from those who wish to reify it and from those who wish to reject it altogether. And we Protestants are no more united on the character and authority of other forms of Christian tradition. Protestants continue in our long-standing disagreement about the nature of the eucharist. Discussions in the Consultation on Church Union make it clear how far apart we are on the question of the threefold ministry. As for the Magisterium, the teaching office of the church, many Protestants would agree on its importance, but there is little agreement as to the nature of that authority or where it should be lodged.

I. THE PROTESTANT SILENCE ON MARY

Then we arrive at the last topic identified in the encyclical: Mary. And here we find (*mirabile dictu*) an area in which Protestants approach something like

¹ (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1995), 90.

unanimity. It is, unfortunately, a unanimity of silence: *We do not talk about Mary*. Indeed, if there is one thing Protestants agree on—across the theological spectrum, women and men, whether in local churches or in seminary classrooms—it is that *we* do not talk about Mary. When we hear language regarding Mary such as that in the encyclical, it sounds odd and alien to our ears. We are unprepared to hear and appropriate such terminology.

In an essay written two decades ago, Raymond E. Brown observed that several different hierarchies of truths come into play in ecumenical dialogue—hierarchies based upon the centrality of the gospel message, hierarchies reflecting ecclesiastical self-identity, and hierarchies based upon devotional impact. He went on to observe that, for Roman Catholics, Mary ranks very high in the hierarchy of devotional life.²

The same could scarcely be said of Protestants. I have come to think, however, that Mary does rank rather high in the Protestant hierarchy of *identity*, but she does so in a negative sense. We are the people who do *not* honor Mary and who find such attention threatening to proper Christian devotion to Jesus Christ. We may not know much about Mary, but we know that we do not have anything to do with her.

If I put this matter in sharp terms it is because I have experience as one who has thought and talked and written about Mary. Lest that comment have about it even a whiff of self-congratulation, let me quickly confess that I took up the study of Mary in the New Testament only because I was invited to do so. “Invited” is even somewhat euphemistic; “strong-armed” would be more honest. As I have been reading and writing about Mary, however, I have also first-hand encounters with Protestant reluctance.

Over the past several years, when I have been asked to conduct continuing education workshops or lay school events, I have consistently offered to address the topic of Mary in scripture. And, not always, but more often than not, the response has tended to sound something like this: “Oh. I don’t think that would attract a very large audience. We’re mostly Protestants here.” That response, interpreted, I take to mean, “*We* don’t talk about Mary.”

Even the great surge of interest in women in the Bible has not substantially altered this reluctance regarding Mary. If anything, it has made the Protestant silence more obvious. In my teaching career, I suppose I have read at least a hundred student papers on the story of the Syrophenician woman. I cannot recall a single such paper on Mary’s confrontation with the boy Jesus in the Jerusalem temple. On this point, the Presbyterian Church’s 1991 “Brief

² “The Meaning of Modern New Testament Studies for an Ecumenical Understanding of Mary,” in *Crises Facing the Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 84–108.

Statement of Faith" is typical. It lifts up Sarah — and appropriately so — but makes no mention, direct or indirect, of Mary.

If we speak together frankly, some of us may admit that our response to Mary is a reaction to certain devotional practices that seem excessive. A friend who shall remain anonymous, knowing of my interest in Mary, sent me a small decal for my car window. It depicts Mary at the top, with her arms outstretched. Beneath Mary stretches a highway crowded with cars. At the bottom the caption reads, "Cruising Along Together."

Such expressions of devotion strike Protestants as odd in the extreme. Do we not, however, experience the same difficulties with certain Protestant devotional practices centered on scripture? I would not want the "Scripture Toaster" I received once as a gift from some pranksters to be taken as representative of Protestant thought about the Bible. Nor would I wish to lift up the *Possibility Thinker's Bible*, which highlights in blue the "positive" passages in the Bible, as exemplary of the Bible's place in Protestant faith.

Despite such aberrations common in most groups of Christians, it seems safe to say that when it comes to Mary, the gap between Protestants, on the one hand, and Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians, on the other, is and remains enormous.

Exceptions can be found among us, of course, although they are so few in number that they actually underscore rather than undermine my point about Protestant silence on Mary. Best known, perhaps, is Karl Barth's substantial treatment of the Virgin Birth in his *Church Dogmatics*.³ In the 1970s Wolfhart Pannenberg wrote an article on Mary as a central issue in the quest for unity,⁴ and an impressive team of Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars collaborated on an important study, *Mary in the New Testament*.⁵ More recently, the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue produced a volume of essays on Mary.⁶

Perhaps the most thoroughgoing Protestant attempt to interpret Mary theologically is that of the Anglican scholar John Macquarrie in his 1990 book, *Mary for All Christians*.⁷ Macquarrie attempts to reinterpret three classic Marian themes in ways that might be appreciated by Protestants: the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, and Mary as Co-redemptrix. Macquarrie's discussion of the Immaculate Conception provides a helpful illustration of his approach. He interprets the doctrine of the Immaculate

³ Vol. 1, Pt. 2: *Doctrine of the Word of God*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1956), 172–202.

⁴ "Mary, Redemption and Unity," *Una Sancta* 24 (1967) 62–68.

⁵ Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and John Reumann, eds., *Mary in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968).

⁶ *The One Mediator, the Saints, and Mary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1992).

⁷ (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990).

Conception as referring, not to a biological event, but to “the absolute origination of a person.”⁸ In this sense, Mary’s conception first takes place within the very mind of God; that is, “in the beginning God had elected Mary to her unique vocation in the scheme of salvation.”⁹ In the same way, God’s election includes all of humankind, but Mary acquires a specific role in connection with what Paul so elegantly refers to as “the fullness of time” (Gal. 4:4). Mary’s conception also takes place within the context of Israel, the particular people with whom God entered into covenant and who had the task of preparing the way for Jesus Christ. Finally, Mary’s conception occurred within the context of the marriage of her parents, whom tradition refers to as Anna and Joachim. Although that conception is biological, Macquarrie wisely notes that it is also personal and spiritual. In this larger sense of the Immaculate Conception, Macquarrie argues, the doctrine does not threaten the Protestant insistence on salvation by grace alone but indeed enhances it, for it demonstrates that the grace shown to Mary (Luke 1:28) results from God’s larger plan for the salvation of humankind.¹⁰

Macquarrie makes an important contribution to ecumenical conversation by his endeavor to recast Marian teaching in language that is congenial to Protestant hearts, but I suspect that few Protestants will find it satisfying. Many of us would have no difficulty affirming that God’s plan for the Christ-event included Mary from the beginning. When that claim takes on the language of “Immaculate Conception,” however, we stumble over the words.

When Protestants work in this fashion—beginning from the Marian doctrines and working outward to Protestant convictions—I have the impression that I am watching someone trying—trying rather desperately, in fact—to dress out of the wardrobe of another. The skirt may be the right length, but the shoes will not fit. The jacket may be just right in the shoulders, but the sleeves hang frightfully close to the knees. The tie may be a designer original, but it simply does not look right around that particular neck.

No, if Protestants are going to talk about Mary—to think about Mary *ecumenically*—and I hope that we are—we must begin in a Protestant-like way. That is to say, we must *begin* with scripture. Ironically, this is precisely what we have *not* done. We have, instead, been content to dismiss devotion to Mary as non-scriptural. *Yet our unwillingness to talk about Mary is also not scriptural.* To raise only the most obvious question, what would it mean for Protestants

⁸ Ibid., 62.

⁹ Ibid., 63.

¹⁰ Ibid., 73–76.

to take seriously the biblical words of Mary, "All generations will call me blessed"?

By virtue of our reluctance, we have deprived ourselves in two ways. Obviously, we have missed opportunities for ecumenical conversation and engagement. Equally important, we have denied ourselves the opportunity to appreciate and be instructed by this important figure in the gospel story.

II. A PROTESTANT APPROACH TO MARY

By way of a first step in exploring what we Protestants have lost because of our reluctance to speak about Mary and what we might be able to say about her, together with other Christians, I shall sketch the portraits of Mary found in the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John (omitting Mark because Mark reports only one incident concerning Jesus' family). The controlling question, then, is what does the New Testament have to say about Mary?¹¹

A. *The Gospel of Matthew*

When we look for Matthew's portrait of Mary, we look almost entirely at the infancy narrative. She appears only briefly elsewhere in the Gospel.

Interpreters often emphasize that Matthew focuses his story on Joseph rather than on Mary. It is to Joseph that the annunciation of Jesus' birth comes. It is Joseph whom the angels direct to flee Herod and then to return again. About Mary, the narrator remains virtually silent. She speaks not a single word, and no one speaks to her. No emotion, no judgment, no opinion is attributed to her. Even in this silence, however, a type of characterization emerges.

Matthew first mentions Mary at the end of the genealogy in 1:1-17, a genealogy that begins with Abraham, traces the line through David, and then culminates with Jesus. What makes this genealogy unusual is that it contains the names of four women. And the women themselves are unusual; these are not the exemplary and well-known figures such as Sarah and Rebecca, but Tamar (who plays the role of a prostitute to force Judah to provide her with the son she deserves under Israelite law), Rahab (who was a prostitute and who assisted the spies in their conquest of Jericho), Ruth (the widow who remained loyal to her mother-in-law and eventually wed the wealthy Boaz), and "the wife of Uriah," better known to us as Bathsheba, who became David's wife

¹¹ The following discussion of Mary in the Gospels draws upon my book *Mary: Glimpses of the Mother of Jesus* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1995).

only after he arranged the death of her husband to cover up their adulterous affair.

Since the patristic period, interpreters have puzzled over the presence of these women in the Matthean genealogy and have offered a multitude of explanations. Their stories, I would insist, are not one story; they are not all sinners or Gentiles, for example. What the stories share is a dynamic—each of these women in some way threatens the status quo, and each is in turn threatened by that status quo. For example, because Judah perceives Tamar as a threat to his remaining son, he in turn threatens her well-being.

When Matthew introduces Mary's name at the end of the genealogy, we know that she has something in common with these other women. He shortly explains what they share. He depicts the scene very concisely: Mary and Joseph are engaged, but they have not yet married. And Mary is pregnant. Then, Matthew says quite simply: "Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly" (1:19).

Engagement in the Palestine of the first century was not merely, as it is among us, a private declaration that could be broken at the whim of either party. It gave to Joseph the legal rights of a husband and obligated Mary to him, regardless of the fact that he and Mary were not yet officially married. Her pregnancy, therefore, constitutes evidence of nothing less than adultery. Joseph could simply divorce her by handing her a "bill of divorce," or he could take legal procedures against her for adultery. If the provisions of Deuteronomic law were being observed at this time (which is by no means certain), Mary might even have been liable to death for her supposed adultery.

Matthew tells us, of course, that Joseph was "a righteous man" who decided to "dismiss her quietly" so as not to disgrace her. In other words, he seeks to avoid scandal by taking the mildest measures possible. What Matthew does not explain is how Joseph's action could remain private or what Joseph thought would happen to Mary. Pregnancy is difficult to hide, but a newborn for whom there is no father is impossible to conceal. In an age in which adultery and illegitimacy were treated very harshly, even Joseph's righteous remedy could have had disastrous consequences for Mary and for her child.

Divine intervention in the form of an angelic visitation prevents Joseph from taking this action. Yet the decision of Joseph allows us to see what it is that Mary has in common with the four women of the genealogy. Mary also threatens the status quo; that is, her pregnancy threatens Joseph because it presents him with a bride who has betrayed him and disgraced herself (or so it

appears). As a result of his sense of being threatened by Mary, Joseph threatens her and her unborn child with ostracism and perhaps far worse.

The second half of Matthew's infancy narrative begins with these words: "In the time of King Herod" (2:1). It concerns itself with Herod's threat to the infant Jesus. Here it is not the good and righteous Joseph who schemes to put Mary and her child away but Herod who threatens to kill the child. What strikes me as important here for our interest in Mary is that *every reference to Mary* in chapter 2 carries a reference to the infant and almost every reference to the infant carries a reference to Mary. The wise men see "the child with Mary his mother" (v. 11). An angel warns Joseph to flee to Egypt, taking with him "the child and his mother" (v. 13). Joseph then takes "the child and his mother" (v. 14). After Herod's death, the angel instructs Joseph to return, and again we find "the child and his mother" (vv. 20, 21). The repetition of the phrase tightly links the two figures together. Whoever threatens the child also threatens his mother. Whoever protects the child also protects his mother.

For Matthew, then, Mary is a silent figure, the mother of Jesus. But Matthew connects her closely with the theme of threats against Jesus. That theme begins, not later, when the adult Jesus encounters authorities who are threatened by him and who threaten him in return; it begins even before his birth, when the good Joseph assumes that he knows what he should do and he has to be stopped by a heavenly messenger before he does it. Mary shares Jesus' peril both from the well-intentioned and from the wicked. When poor and imperiled Christians turn to Mary as the Mother of Sorrows, consciously or not they touch a thread in Matthew's Gospel.

B. The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles

By contrast with Matthew's near silence on Mary, Luke not only narrates scenes in which she appears but also includes remarks of Mary, comments addressed to her, and even reports concerning her responses. If we are still left wishing to know more about her, we nevertheless need to acknowledge how much more Luke provides regarding Mary than do the other evangelists.

If Matthew presents Mary exclusively in maternal terms, as the one whose maternity both threatens and is threatened, Luke assigns to Mary three distinct roles—disciple, prophet, and mother.

First, Mary is a disciple; for Luke, indeed, she is the first disciple. In 1:38, Mary consents to Gabriel's annunciation with the words, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." With that statement she submits herself to God's will, specifically to God's plan for human salvation through the event of Jesus Christ. She identifies herself as a

“servant” or “slave” (which better translates the Greek word *doulos*). This is what it takes to become a disciple— male or female: obedience to God’s will.

Second, Mary becomes a prophet. With the Magnificat, her praise of God for God’s action in her life and on behalf of Israel, Mary takes on the role of a prophet. Luke does not explicitly refer to Mary’s speech as prophetic; neither does Luke say that she speaks through the Holy Spirit (as he does with Zechariah). Her conception occurs when the Holy Spirit overtakes her (1:35), of course, which may explain why Luke does not feel it necessary to specify that she speaks via the Spirit. More to the point, the Magnificat itself reflects the prophetic themes of God’s intercession on behalf of the weak and powerless, God’s scorn for the mighty, God’s promises to God’s people, all of which are so familiar from the Old Testament. Mary is a prophet.

Third, Mary is a mother. This is both her most obvious and her most intricate role (as may be the case for all of us who are parents). What I am after is not the general challenge of parenting, however, but the way in which Luke’s treatment of Mary’s maternity interjects some tension into his story. When the shepherds come to see the infant Jesus, Luke says that they “made known what had been told them about this child” (Luke 2:17) but “Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart” (2:19).

Virtually the same expression occurs at the end of Luke 2. There Mary and Joseph have started home from the Passover celebration in Jerusalem only to find that their twelve-year-old son is not with them. When they do find him, back in Jerusalem, and indeed in the temple itself, they find Jesus amazing the teachers of Israel. Mary bluntly confronts him with their anguish over him, and he responds. Then Luke says: “But they [Joseph and Mary] did not understand what he said to them.” The three of them return together to Nazareth. The entire Lukan infancy narrative concludes with the words: “His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor” (2:52).

So the New Revised Standard Version translates, suggesting that Mary was simply storing up sweet memories. But the evangelists are not usually sentimental, and what Mary does is not so much to “treasure” as to “ponder,” to “reflect,” to “worry.” The wording used of her appears also in the Septuagint of Genesis 37 when Jacob worries about the troublesome dreams of his son Joseph (Gen. 37:11). It appears again in the Septuagint of Daniel, when Daniel frets over the meaning of an apocalyptic vision (Dan. 7:28).

In this way, Luke introduces a question about Mary: What does she understand? What will she do? Will she persist in her discipleship? Will she, like others, turn away? The question is not finally answered until the

beginning of Luke's second volume, the Acts of the Apostles, when Mary joins the apostles in the upper room just before Pentecost. Mary is a disciple, a prophet, and a mother, but it is as a worrying, troubled mother that she becomes an intriguing part of Luke's story.

C. *The Gospel of John*

As is often the case, John's treatment differs substantially from that of Luke and Matthew. Instead of speaking of "Mary," John refers to "the mother of Jesus" or "his mother." When Jesus addresses his mother, he calls her "Woman." She appears in two scenes, one at the beginning of the Gospel and one near its end. In the first of these scenes, the wedding feast at Cana, the words of Jesus' mother appear to occasion his first miracle. In the second, she stands near the cross. Neither of these scenes has a counterpart in the synoptic Gospels.

The story of the wedding at Cana in John 2 has yielded a wide—even wild—variety of interpretations of Mary. That diversity of viewpoints reflects not only the diversity of the interpreters but the *unclarity of the story itself*. The story abounds with symbolism (a wedding, water, wine) but its importance goes well beyond individual symbols. It is a narrative of anticipation; it anticipates the gifts of God that Jesus will bring, the hour of Jesus' revelation, and the need for decision about Jesus.

Within this story, the mother of Jesus plays a deceptively simple role. In the first place, she is merely a functionary, a part of setting the stage for the event. She tells Jesus that there is no wine and then tells the servants to do whatever he instructs them. Her words to Jesus and to the servants provoke the action of the miracle, but that is not to say that she knows a miracle is at hand or that she intends to provoke Jesus into a dramatic action. If some other woman, otherwise unknown to us, had taken this part in the story, interpreters would scramble to distance Jesus from that woman.

Jesus' mother also functions within this story to anticipate the crucifixion. Jesus initially refuses her request with the words, "My hour [that is, the hour of his death] has not yet come." Because she appears at only those two places in John's Gospel, the reference to the hour here surely points ahead to her second appearance in Chapter 19.

In addition, the presence of Jesus' mother at Cana asserts the humanity of Jesus. If the opening of John's Gospel, with its claim that Jesus is "word" and "light," "grace" and "truth," creates the impression that Jesus has only a kind of docetic existence, one that appears to be but is not really human, then the end of Chapter 1 and the beginning of Chapter 2 correct that impression. The

Cana miracle and the passage that precedes it *invest* Jesus with a human mother and father and brothers and home. Here the narrator portrays dramatically the words of 1:14: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us."

Jesus' mother appears again at the crucifixion, in the second of three brief scenes at the cross (John 19:23-30), the first consisting of the soldiers who gamble for the possession of Jesus' clothing, and the third depicting Jesus' plea for water followed by the death itself. By connecting these three brief scenes, the narrator depicts the separation of Jesus from his earthly existence. First, persons who are indifferent or even hostile to Jesus strip him of his clothing. Second, he separates himself from those who stand close to him, even his mother and the disciple whom he loves. Third, he takes a final drink of wine and gives up his own breath.

Despite the fact that the narrator devotes not a single word to her description and places in her mouth not so much as a syllable, her presence at the cross plays an important function. It recalls the only other occasion on which she was present and the initial announcement about Jesus' "hour." It also recalls the network of family that connects Jesus to earthly existence. When she and the Beloved Disciple are given to one another and depart the scene, Jesus' connections to earthly existence likewise depart from John's Gospel. Her role in this incident has to do with Jesus' separation from his own earthly life.

Mary's role in the Gospel of John, then, consists exclusively of her relationship to Jesus. She remains unnamed because what makes her important is completely defined by the fact that she is Jesus' mother. While we might say the same of the treatment of Mary in Luke and Matthew as well, Luke does portray her as an individual who can interpret the events around her and who responds to them in her own way. Although Matthew depicts Mary exclusively as mother, he does understand that she is threatened by the actions Joseph contemplates as she is by Herod's plots against her child. John's references to "the mother of Jesus" leave little room for her to interpret or even to be threatened by external events. She exists in the narrative to reveal something about Jesus, not something about herself.

III. THE FIRST DISCIPLE

This whirlwind tour of the most important New Testament passages concerning Mary returns us to the issue at hand: What have we discovered about Mary *in the Bible*, and how might biblical teaching about Mary enable Christians to speak together about her?

In Matthew's Gospel she is threatening and threatened by her connection with Jesus. That is, the supposed scandal of her pregnancy poses a threat to Joseph's status and the report of her baby's future kingship later threatens Herod. Because of these perceived threats, she is threatened in return, first by the well-intentioned Joseph who may destroy her position in society, and then by Herod who may destroy her child.

In Luke's Gospel, she is first of all obedient. What Mary says in response to Gabriel's annunciation is, "Behold, the slave of the Lord." Mary is not simply acquiescent, however. Wearing the mantle of the prophet, she declares forthrightly what God has done for her and for God's people. It matters not at all that she borrows her words from Hannah's Song and elsewhere in scripture. In Luke's presentation, Mary becomes the prophetic interpreter of that scripture.

She also reflects on what has taken place. It is Mary who worries when the shepherds arrive and Mary who puzzles over Jesus' presence in the Jerusalem Temple. Had such responses been attributed to Zechariah, we would long ago have hailed him as the first Christian theologian.

In John's Gospel, the presence of the one called "the Mother of Jesus" serves to underscore Jesus' humanity and to anticipate the hour of the cross. In addition, notice that Mary and the other women, together with the Beloved Disciple, are said to be "standing by" the cross. By contrast with Peter who has fled, they maintain this vigil of faithfulness.

At the risk of harmonizing these accounts, I would propose that each of them is consistent with the identification of Mary as a disciple of Jesus. True, we do not see her following Jesus or sitting at his feet (although she does appear among his followers in Jerusalem as they wait for Pentecost). Her actions, however, are those of a disciple—one who consents to God's call, who does not always understand, who nevertheless stands by, and who participates in the scandal of the gospel itself.

If we can say that Mary is a disciple, even the first disciple of Jesus, then we have taken an important step together. And, if we can say that Mary is a disciple, then is it not a Protestant sort of thing to affirm that Mary is, symbolically speaking, the Mother of Disciples, even the Mother of Believers?

For our Catholic and Orthodox sisters and brothers, that may appear to be only a first, faltering baby step. For those of us who are Protestants, however, it may seem a perilous leap.

Why should that step forward perturb us? At least in preaching, we recall Thomas as the exemplar of those who doubt. We see in Peter's denial of Jesus our own weakness and in his reinstatement hope for ourselves. We openly

celebrate another Mary (the sister of Martha) for her attentiveness to Jesus' teaching, and we similarly regard the Syrophoenician woman for her persistence. If we can see these people as our predecessors in faith, then perhaps we can also see Mary as the Mother of all Believers.

The fear, of course, is that such attention to Mary detracts from the rightful attention given to her son. That is an important concern, to be sure, but I have come to think it overdrawn in this instance. If Mary is the First Disciple, she is not a disciple of herself: "Behold," she declares, "the slave of the Lord." And if her discipleship gives birth to that of others, they also are not disciples of Mary. They, too, are disciples of Jesus.

If we can say these things together, then perhaps the day will come when Mary's words are fulfilled, and "all generations"—even those of Protestants—will yet call her "blessed."

“Aminadab’s Chariot”: The Predicament of Biblical Interpretation

by KARLFRIED FROEHLICH

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I. PRINCIPLES AND RULES: SNIFFING OUT THE ISSUES

THESE ARE hard times for biblical interpretation. Not only that—these are hard times for the Bible itself. Recent reports of Bible societies reveal that the sales of Bibles in Western languages are dramatically down in recent years, except in Eastern Europe. One might be tempted to answer that the market is simply saturated. Obviously we are only scratching the surface with this answer; it may, however, have a bearing on the problems biblical *interpretation* is experiencing. What is for sale is almost exclusively translations, and translations are themselves interpretations. The exhilarating multiplication of English translations in print in recent decades has reached frightening dimensions, and most of them claim some official authority and support. This is not only true for the old favorites like the King James or Authorized Version but for new ones as well such as the Revised and New Revised Standard Versions, Today’s English Version, the New English Bible, the Ecumenical Version, and a host of others. A major problem, then, is the very existence, and thus the rivalry of multiple authoritative interpretations.

In this situation, the integrity of the biblical word itself seems to be dissolving in the experience of our generation. You read your daily devotions or the text for your congregational Bible study in one translation and then in another, and you hardly recognize that it is the same passage. You want to memorize a verse, and you are faced with an embarrassing range of possible wording, right down to such basic texts as the Lord’s Prayer and Psalm twenty-three. You want to buy a searchable Bible for your computer. Which one should you choose when you don’t know for sure anymore what words to search for? It is no wonder that people are opting for the King James Version again—at least you know what you’ll find there. Again, the problem with the

translations only scratches the surface. How much more serious must be the problems with biblical *interpretation* in general when we dig deeper?

Not long ago, the future of biblical interpretation looked bright. In the wake of World War II, a “biblical theology” movement was sweeping the international scene, and American scholars played a leading part in its development. Teachers like James Muilenberg, G. Ernest Wright and, on the Princeton Seminary campus, Bernhard W. Anderson inspired an entire generation with their focus on a theology of the “Mighty Acts of God,” witnessed in the literature of the Old Israel and the New, and experienced in the contemporary upheavals and triumphs of the postwar era. This was the time when not only form-criticism and tradition history illumined biblical texts in amazingly new ways, but Gerhard von Rad could make the scholarly argument for an inner dynamic of the Old Testament tradition logically, and in a way inevitably, leading to the New Testament, while Hartmut Gese could argue for the Septuagint canon as the normative one for Protestant theologians who “can never endorse the masoretic canon, for it obscures in significant measure the continuity with the New Testament.”¹ The biblical theology movement has had an immense influence on theological trends in the past four decades, including such areas as social ethics and social action, confessional and ecumenical theology, interdisciplinary efforts within the theological curriculum, and the growth of American Evangelicalism.

Times have changed. The early enthusiasm for the movement has been dampened by a good deal of perspectival reorientation through the increased intensity of the Jewish/Christian dialogue and Holocaust studies. It has also been influenced by new forms of scientific investigation in anthropology, sociology, and social psychology. Postmodern hermeneutics in general have moved from the central interest in author, genre, and textual transmission to even more fundamental questions of the nature of a text, the process of the emergence of meaning, and the role of the reader. For biblical interpretation, this has opened a whole new “can of worms.” For people in the churches, where the concern for the use of the Bible has its natural place, it has meant an unprecedented invasion of unsettling forces: pluralism, relativism, competition, and a whole new measure of confusion at the realization that there is no clear authority anywhere which could adjudicate between the sides being taken. David Tracy, a prominent Catholic theologian, has described the situation as “the once stable text having now been replaced by the unstable

¹ Harmut Gese, “Erwägungen zur Einheit der biblischen Theologie,” *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 67 (1970), 423.

reader," and Robert Jenson, a concerned Lutheran churchman, has repeatedly characterized the trend as "nihilist hermeneutics."

These are harsh words, perhaps too harsh. The "text" never was that stable. Bart Ehrmann has demonstrated that doctrinal "corrections" of New Testament passages were accepted into the received text as late as the fourth and fifth centuries,² and the work of the so-called Paris Bible "correctories" tried to establish a stable text of the Vulgate in the thirteenth century when the mess of rival versions was becoming intolerable. And the "unstable reader?" This, of course, was the charge leveled against Protestant exegesis in general by the Catholic controversialists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: for them, Protestant biblical interpretation was the epitome of unbridled subjectivity. Nothing new here either.

One thing is clear: however stable the text, however unstable the reader, neither has ever existed outside a community of faith. It was a church council and a pope who finally created a stable Vulgate by endorsing the post-Tridentine Clementina. It was Protestant churches in which the "unstable" Protestant readers were united under the common confessional commitment to the scriptures as their sole norm and rule.

One natural reaction to the insecurity about the authority, integrity, and normativity of the Bible has been the phenomenal growth of fundamentalist groups in this country and elsewhere, and their enormous influence on public life and opinion. A fundamentalist approach to scripture is often the answer of well-meaning people who, facing the personal and societal ambiguities of biblical pluralism, are unprepared or unwilling to accept the measure of required relativism because they have only one life to live and prefer clear authority structures consonant with their religious experience and their honest vision for a better society. With this attitude, they join a longstanding anti-intellectual undercurrent in American culture which finds intellectually demanding debate unnecessary and sophisticated argument repulsive.

Of course, not all fundamentalism is anti-intellectual. If we look for the trend in our mainline churches, it is frequently part of a strong confessionalism; I mean by this a strong confessional commitment, which by its very nature is quite intellectual. Confessionalists have to be willing to *think*, and to think *hard*—as anyone who has ever studied a confessional document of the sixteenth century knows. One of the most conservative branches of American Lutheranism, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, used to prepare its

² Bart Ehrmann, "The Text of Mark in the Hands of the Orthodox," in *Biblical Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective: Studies in Honor of Karlfried Froehlich on His Sixtieth Birthday*, eds. Mark S. Burrows and Paul Rorem (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 19–31.

future ministers in a secondary school system which offered a thorough and comprehensive liberal arts education from a young age forward, the benefits of which are still remembered with gratitude by living scholars and theologians such as Jaroslav Pelikan and Martin Marty.

Or, closer to home on this seminary campus: there was Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, in honor of whose wife this lectureship has been endowed, and whose named chair I had the privilege to occupy for a number of years. Warfield was a solid biblical fundamentalist if there ever was one, a formidable mind, the apologist par excellence for the doctrine of the plenary verbal inspiration of the Bible, Old and New Testament alike. Like his colleagues at Princeton, Warfield regarded the Bible as the one and only repository of saving doctrines which God had provided for humankind to be teased out of the progressive revelations contained therein into a perfect synthesis by the church’s theologians past and present. He called this enterprise “biblical theology.” The doctrine of biblical inspiration and inerrancy was only one of these doctrines. For Warfield, as David Kelsey has observed, the doctrine was not indispensable logically—no other Bible doctrine depended on it; but methodologically it was, once it had been established. While Warfield claimed he could prove his thesis, I am convinced his interest here must be seen primarily as part of his *confessional* commitment, his admiration for the Westminster Confession and its central place in the unfolding of Bible doctrines:

It is our special felicity that, as Reformed Christians and heirs of the richest and fullest formulation of Reformed thought, we possess in that precious heritage, the Westminster Confession, the most complete, the most admirable, the most perfect statement of the essential Christian doctrine of Holy Scripture which has ever been formed by man.³

Warfield obviously did not worry about a predicament of biblical interpretation. The task of quarrying the Bible for doctrine was a joy and a challenge worth spending his life on. If there was any predicament, it probably was his cross of having to fight a host of adversaries, detractors, and wrongheaded thinkers within and without his church. With regard to the Bible itself, only one point was a source of frustration for him: not errors of fact or contradictions—they all dissolved easily as adjustable difficulties—but the hazards of the *transmission of the text*. Warfield realized that neither in the English Bible, nor in the best Hebrew and Greek texts available to him in print, did he have

³ B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1948), 111.

the absolutely inerrant Bible for which he fought so hard. His response to the difficulty was simple: "The Bible we declare to be of infallible truth' is the Bible that God gave us, not the corruptions and slips which scribes and printers have given us, some of which are in every copy." Only the (supposedly lost) autographs were really inspired. From Warfield's insistence on the autographs you may infer his opinion about the role of the biblical languages in the Princeton Seminary curriculum. Bill Harris, the seminary archivist, has assured me that, according to incontestable documentary evidence, Dr. Warfield received Dr. Erdman, the newly appointed Professor of English Bible, in a perfectly friendly manner personally, but he was certainly not happy over the successful introduction of this unwarranted field on his campus.

II. AMINADAB'S CHARIOT

Now this is the point where Aminadab's chariot comes in. Do you know who Aminadab is? Neither do I. Not this one, at least. You may have tried to look him up, and you probably became a little frustrated. Indeed, the case *is* complicated. The Hebrew Bible, and thus the King James Version and the NRSV, know of two persons of this name, though technically, the name is spelled with double "m" and an *ayin* in Hebrew. One of the two is prominent enough to appear in the New Testament genealogies of Jesus as the great-grandfather of Boaz, the husband of Ruth (Matt 1:14; Luke 3:33). The Hebrew Bible also mentions three people with a very similar name, *Abinadab*, the most important of whom is the worthy who kept the ark at Gibeon after the Philistines had returned it (on a chariot), before David took it to Jerusalem (1 Sam 7:1; 2 Sam 6:3). The Greek translation, the Septuagint, calls all of these persons "Aminadab" and adds two more: the natural father of Esther (whose name is not mentioned in the Hebrew book of Esther; Mordecai was Esther's foster father), and an enigmatic Aminadab, who is connected with "chariots" (*barmata*), according to Song of Songs 6:12. In this verse, the Vulgate follows the Greek and reads *propter quadrigas Aminadab*, "on account of the quadriga of Aminadab"; the Latin plural designates a chariot with a team of four horses. This finally is the Aminadab of my title, because for centuries during the Middle Ages, "Aminadab's chariot," with its four horses, was among the common biblical images for the one scripture and its fourfold interpretation.

Unfortunately, the scriptural verse in question, Song of Songs 6:12, presents us with an absolute conundrum. Marvin Pope in the Anchor Bible calls it "the most difficult verse in the Canticle," a verse which "continues to vex translators and commentators." First of all, while the original Hebrew

does speak of chariots (*markevot*), there seems to be no name connected with it; the Hebrew reads: *markevot ammi-nadib* “chariots of my people—my noble, princely people”; from *nadib*, “prince”). The rest of the sentence is of no help. It seems to say: “I did not know—my soul—it set me—chariots of my princely people.” Now, what *do* you do with a verse like this? Can you just leave it out or replace it with three dots . . . ? No Bible version has dared to do that. All of them attempt a translation—that is, an *interpretation*. You *have* to interpret even though there is no clear meaning. This, precisely is the predicament. You *have* to interpret, because the Bible comes in the form of human language, and language forces the reader to construct meaning in the reading and then ponder what it may have to do with the Word of God. In a case like Song of Songs 6:12, what can one do to construct the meaning?

If one reads the nine pages Pope devotes to this impossible verse, one is utterly amazed at the variety of options interpreters in the Jewish, the Christian, and the modern literary-critical camps have put forward. They have tried to emend the text, to postulate insertions, to transpose or reinterpret particular words, to construct a possible syntax, to consult the context. The results are dangerously speculative; every interpreter goes out on a limb, every interpretation is vulnerable to criticism. But danger is attractive. It is amazing to watch the logic: the more intractable the textual problem, the greater the zeal and the creativity applied to it. Biblical interpretation means, and always has meant, exercising one’s imagination. We sometimes forget this simple truth. The goal of interpretation is not to remove dangers, but to face them squarely—and then to go out on a limb, daringly. Concerning our verse from Song of Songs 6, there has been much daring indeed. “Before I knew, my desire hurled me on the chariots of my people, as their prince”; “I did not know myself; she made me feel more than a prince reigning over the myriads of his people”; “before I knew it, my heart had made me the blessed one of my kinswomen”; “Before I realized it, I was stricken with a terrible homesickness and wanted to be back among my own people.” These are only a few modern English gropings. There are many more. 2,500 years were a long time for imaginative attempts to put this small piece into the mosaic of the whole, that “vast maze of coherence which a life with and under the biblical word . . . has created in the soul and mind of Christian people.” Aminadab’s chariot, by scribal accident and then by the pure power of the image, but probably not without divine providence, has appropriated a place for itself at the heart of the history of biblical interpretation in the West.

III. HISTORY OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Personally, I have always been fascinated by the Bible, its stories, its images, its puzzles, its projections. It was this fascination that lured me into the study of theology. As a teenager, I belonged to a group of Sunday school assistants whose job it was to tell Bible stories to younger children. During the Thursday training sessions offered by our pastor, I annoyed him with so many questions about what was behind those texts that he said one night: "When you're out of school, why don't you study theology. I promise, you will get more answers than you ever bargained for." He was right. Moreover, ever since my seminary years in the early 1950s, I have been much impressed by Gerhard Ebeling's thesis formulated in the title of his inaugural lecture at the University of Tübingen (February, 1947): "Kirchengeschichte als Geschichte der Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift," which the English translation rendered as "Church History is the History of the Interpretation of Scripture."⁴ You will understand that it is natural for me to attempt a "history of biblical interpretation" in these Warfield lectures, such a history serving as an introduction to what "theologizing" could and perhaps should mean today.

There are a few standard "histories of interpretation," although not many in English. Invariably, they present the material in chronological order, organizing it by "periods." But there is a problem with any periodization: it suggests linear development and is tied to the idea of progress, a progress that will always reflect the particular agenda of the author. This danger is nowhere more apparent than in the older standard work in English, Frederick W. Farrar's *History of Interpretation* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1886). Farrar was a progressive Anglican educator and churchman, well known as a teacher and preacher, who served from 1895 to his death in 1903 as Dean of Canterbury Cathedral. He delivered the substance of his book as the Bampton Lectures at St. Mary's Church, Oxford, in 1885. Farrar defines his agenda as an apologetic endeavor, "defending the cause of Christianity by furthering the truth." Looking at "the truth" concerning the history of biblical interpretation, however, his summary judgment is that "the task before us is a melancholy one" (p. 8) because, on the whole, "past methods of interpretation were erroneous" (p. 9), "systematizing the art of misinterpretation" rather than furthering interpretation. Going through his seven periods, Farrar sees system after system of these "agelong misapprehensions" being "condemned each in turn by the widening knowledge of mankind" (pp. xi and xiii). Obviously, he takes his stand enthusiastically with critical post-

⁴ In *The Word of God and Tradition*, trans. S. H. Hooke (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 11-31.

Enlightenment scholarship, though with some Anglican caution and the optimistic conviction that the divine truth enshrined in the Bible, whatever it may be, will stand vindicated in the end. No apologetic strategies can be more directly serviceable to this end, he feels, than “the removal of false methods of interpretation by which divine authority has been impaired” (p. 18).

This triumphalist scientism disregards in an embarrassing way the ever-continuing predicament of biblical interpretation. There will never be a time when all problematic passages are satisfactorily explained as both Farrar and Warfield seem to expect. History-writing looks at the past for the sake of the present and the future, but the path it traces can never be seen simply as a transition from darkness to light. History must give us perspective—and today we must stress the plural: perspectives, that is, insight into the various options of looking at a vast enterprise such as biblical interpretation; options that have been exercised in the past and have had their own effects, dangers, promises, and limits. Past history is never fully past, and if its questions are not acknowledged, they will continue as a burden into the present.

I have divided my analysis of the history of biblical interpretation not chronologically by periods but topically by subjects, choosing a subdivision by the traditional fourfold sense of Scripture that dominated medieval hermeneutics from the time of Augustine to the Reformation. Schoolchildren memorized its elements through a simple jingle which was probably composed by a thirteenth-century schoolmaster:

*Littera gesta docet,
Quid credas allegoria,
Moralis quid agas,
Quo tendas anagogia.*

*The letter teaches the deeds of the past,
Allegory that which to believe thou hast,
The moral sense what thou must do,
Anagogy the upward path to pursue.*

I am, of course, aware of the wholesale rejection of the fourfold sense among Protestants almost from the beginning. Martin Luther, who had used the system in his early exegetical work, began criticizing it as early as 1516 as a useless diversion, typical of the formalism of scholastic theologians who had nothing better to do than play word games.

Post-Enlightenment biblical scholarship almost without exception saw the fourfold sense as a hopeless antique from the horror chest of the Dark Ages.

Farrar speaks of the "pure fiction of the *multiplex intelligentia* or fourfold sense" (p. 26) which vitiated the *Glossa ordinaria*, that popular exegetical compend of five-hundred years, and more recent evaluations are often no less disparaging. I am also aware, however, of its recent revival, which began with the massive historical study by the Jesuit theologian, and later Cardinal, Henri de Lubac, published in four volumes from 1959 to 1964 under the title, *Exégèse médiévale: Les quatre sens de l'écriture*. De Lubac was a major representative of the French "nouvelle théologie" which, though censured by the authorities of his order and in Vatican circles, attempted to break old molds of stale theological attitudes and make room for a new spirituality based on the pre-Thomist sources of Catholic doctrine. There have been Protestant voices as well. David Steinmetz of Duke University published an article in *Theology Today* in April of 1980 whose provocative thesis reads: "The medieval theory of levels of meaning in the biblical text, with all its admitted defects, flourished because it is true, while the modern theory of a single meaning, with all its demonstrable virtues, is false" (p. 38). Steinmetz' central point about the multiple meaning of the biblical text certainly has the sympathy of the "postmodern" hermeneutics of recent years which reckons with the polysemous nature of a text as a matter of course and with multiple levels of understanding which incorporate a variety of perspectives, including the exegetical history of a passage, into the interpretive event.

Thanks to the somewhat unreal Aminadab of Song of Songs 6:12, one of the common designations of the fourfold method has been "the *quadriga*," the chariot drawn by four horses. Other biblical images were also used for this purpose. They have in common that they depict moving fours: the four flowing rivers of paradise—more precisely, the one river dividing into four streams; the four-wheeled trolleys in Solomon's temple; and, especially the *merkavah*, the throne wagon of Ezekiel's vision (Ezek 1 and 10) with its four living creatures and four wheels. All these images imply that the fourfold sense is something dynamic, a movement full of energy, of life, of future. The *merkavah* was frequently used also as a symbol of the unity and diversity of the four Gospels. You have probably seen the four living creatures whose faces Ezekiel describes as the symbols of the four evangelists in works of Christian art: a man for Matthew, a lion for Mark, an ox for Luke, and an eagle for John. They could move freely in all directions, with their wheels within wheels, a magnificent sight; and this is exactly what the evangelists did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth and their words to the ends of the earth" (Ps 19:4)—all four corners of it. The "four corners" may explain why a fourfold division of scriptural senses, not a threefold or a fivefold one, emerged as the

norm: four is the number of the inhabited world, the *oikoumenē*, the region for which the scriptural word is destined. Aminadab’s swift chariot, the *quadriga* of scriptural senses, comes with four horses in the medieval world of symbolic reality. It did not have to be this way, but the Vulgate clearly speaks of a *quadriga* in Canticles 6:12. And since it *is* one, it “makes sense.”

IV. THE “SENSES” OF SCRIPTURE

You will have noticed that, in my lecture titles, I have combined the fourfold sense of scripture with the system of the *five* bodily senses. Aristotle taught that there are five senses, not four or six: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. They have often been used as a rhetorical device to organize a presentation. In the moral tradition, where they were not seen as neutral but as gates for the temptations of the flesh, they became extremely popular ever since Augustine had described his own conversion as a fight with the allurements of the five senses in Book 10, chapters 30 to 34 of the *Confessions*. The literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is full of titillating allegories of the senses where it often remains unclear whether the authors take more seriously the description of the pleasures of the senses or their rejection.

A major reason for the combination of the two in organizing these lectures was the phenomenon of the term itself: we call both the forms of scriptural understanding and the forms of physical perception “senses.” The entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary* shows that the word-field in English covers the five bodily senses as well as several psychological activities in the vicinity of feeling, but a very large area of use concerns words and language: sense is “the meaning or signification of a word or phrase.” The situation is similar in Latin, though with a different distribution of weight: the largest area of usage here is perception, awareness, and feeling, while *sensus* as the meaning of a word or phrase constitutes a small, relatively late group under the heading, “that which occurs to the mind.” In Greek, the mind would be the *nous*, but there is no terminological bridge to the senses, *aistheteria*. “Sense” as the “meaning of a word or phrase” would have to be related to *nous*—the composite noun *hyponoia* means the “sub-sense” of the classical texts which the later allegorists attempted to spell out. The bodily senses (*aistheteria*), on the other hand, belong in the discussion of human perception, the relation of the self to the outside world, or more broadly to reality, and it is an activity of the *soul* (*psychē*), the constitutive part of the self. The tradition reckoned with a wide variety of ways of perceiving. Plato’s psychology did not distinguish between the five senses, feeling hot and cold, pleasure and discomfort or fear.

Aristotle, however, introduced a new biological perspective: body and soul together constitute the self. Thus, not only the soul perceives, but also the body. "Sensation is produced in the soul by way of the body"—a general truth that Thomas Aquinas, centuries later, formulated succinctly: "Nothing is in the intellect which has not been in the senses before" (*Summa Theologiae* Ia q.78:3). Returning to English and Latin again, you can see what happened in the English usage, and probably in later Latin as well: there was a strong shift of emphasis in the word-field of "sense" and "senses." The importance of *language* as an access to reality has increased tremendously. This change implies, at the very least, that hermeneutics and esthetics (the theory of perception) belong closely together in the Western tradition. In terms of our topic, the four senses of scripture and the five bodily senses make a good pair.

It will be no surprise, therefore, that Aminadab's hermeneutical chariot has a counterpart in a chariot of the physical senses. One of the earliest allegorical poems in the Middle Ages, Alan of Lille's "Anticlaudianus," tells the story of Prudence who invites the seven liberal arts to construct a chariot on which she, together with Wisdom, will ride to heaven to ask God for the archetype of a perfect soul to fashion a new human being who would overcome the imperfection of the old, original work of nature.⁵ The five senses are the team and Reason is the charioteer. The party does reach the empyrean but Reason can go no further. Theology appears and counsels Prudence to leave the chariot behind and mount a single horse, Hearing. This advice is followed and the mission succeeds. Alan is quite aware of possible criticism of his artifice, which C. S. Lewis has called "nearly worthless," "a book of the melancholy kind that claim[s] our attention solely as influences."⁶ Alan defends himself by drawing heavily on the precedent of the hermeneutical *quadriga*: "Let those not show disdain for this work who are still wailing in the cradles of the nurses and are being suckled at the breasts of the lower arts . . . For in this work, the sweetness of the literal sense will soothe the ears of boys, the moral instruction will inspire the mind on the road to perfection, the sharp subtlety of allegory will whet the advanced intellect" (pp. 40-41). The chariot is a conveyance, a means of trans-portion, of transfer, of dramatic movement—but where? We were not quite sure in the case of the "*quadriga* Aminadab," but here, we are told in no uncertain terms: it is a movement upward, an *anagōgē*, a journey to God, like the sweep of the chariot that took Elijah into heaven, or if you prefer, like the winged chariot of Plato's *Phaedrus*.

⁵ *Anticlaudianus or the Good and Perfect Man*, trans. by James J. Sheridan (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973).

⁶ *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford: The University Press, 1936), 98 and 100.

V. ISSUES OF INTERPRETATION

Are you beginning to “sniff out” the issues? The sense of smell is assigned a central position, quite literally, in Aristotle’s system. Mathematically, the number five allows for a center, and this is where smell belongs: on one side are the two senses dependent on a medium such as air and transparency (seeing and hearing), on the other, the two that are independent (taste and touch); in the human face, eyes and ears are located above, tongue and touch (which is distributed throughout the body) below the nose.

What then *are* the issues involved in the never-ending predicament of biblical interpretation, in the necessity of constantly having to construct a meaning, though there is seldom just one correct answer to the problem of the text? How does one respond to the challenge creatively and imaginatively? Our exegesis courses in seminary should have taught us, and exegetical handbooks list the steps to be taken. Without further ado, we roll up our sleeves and go to work to solve the problem—yes, the *problem*, because that is what we assume it is. We compare the textual evidence, establish the meaning of the words; we emend the text or propose an alternative syntax; we consult the context and attempt a translation. When it comes to Song of Songs 6:12, we may end up siding with the editors of the NRSV who print: “Before I was aware, my fancy set me in a chariot beside my prince,” and then add a footnote: “The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.” Undoubtedly, we have solved the “problem” as far as this can be done. But is the challenge of this verse—in fact, of any biblical text we read—exhausted by being treated as a problem? The steps we are taking belong to the world of methods and rules, an extremely useful category of things when it comes to problem-solving, like the mechanical arts of Aristotle’s cosmos of knowledge; but they are only tools designed to ease the predicament of having to find explanations to problems that have no obvious solutions.

The history of biblical interpretation, where it has been sketched or described, has been understood as a history of tools, of the methods and rules applied in the attempt to solve the questions the text raises. This is very obvious in Farrar’s Bampton lectures. Of course, since Farrar takes such a dim view of all exegetical “methods” prior to the advent of modern critical studies, they all receive failing marks ranging from “deficient” to “erroneous” and “insipid” with only slight variations of mitigating qualification. For each of his pre-Reformation epochs, Farrar can even name a “definite exegetic compendium” that illustrates the arbitrary rules and methods in use at the time; for the rabbinic epoch, he mentions the seven Rules of Hillel, for the Alexandrian epoch some methodological sections from Philo, for the patristic

epoch Tyconius' "Book of Rules" and Eucherius' "Formulae of Spiritual Understanding", and for the scholastic epoch the fallacious theory of a fourfold sense.

I myself thought at one time that such clearly formulated textbooks of exegetical rules constituted the best sources for the history of biblical interpretation. They seem to allow us to articulate and quantify differences, changes, and transformations from one form of interpretation to another with ease. Those rules and methods were taught and learned, and we can distill the theory behind the exegetical practices of commentaries, sermons, and treatises quite directly from the teachers' manuals, rather than having to piece it together by careful, painstaking analysis of volumes of interpretation. I edited a collection of such hermeneutical texts, but in working on the project, I soon realized that the situation was more complicated. For one thing, most of the rules were not original to the context of interpreting the Bible. They were borrowed from the surrounding culture. Raphael Loewe has shown that Hillel's Rules originated in Hellenistic law-court oratory; Philo's hermeneutical keys had their precedent in the classical methods of Homeric interpretation; and Cassian's formulation of the fourfold sense goes back to an Augustinian model which was borrowed from late-classical rhetoric. The texts themselves taught me that knowing methods and rules did not suffice for a full understanding of what was going on in the theory and practice of biblical interpretation. The knowledge of methods and rules may make an *exegete*; it does not yet make an *interpreter*.

Let me unpack this last sentence a bit. "Exegesis" was part of the Hellenistic educational system which, according to Henri Irénée Marrou, moved in three stages, all of them focused on classical texts like Homer and Hesiod.⁷ The first stage inculcated the basic skills of reading and writing. The second stage familiarized the student with the literary heritage in several steps (*merē*, parts): there was first the *meros diorthōtikon* (we would say, textual criticism), in which the text would be established, dictated, copied, and corrected. It was followed by the *meros anagnōstikon*, where memorization as well as reading and declamation, complete with contests and prizes, were central, and finally by the *meros exegetikon*, "exegesis," which took the most time and effort. In "exegesis," the teacher, called grammarian (*grammatikos*), explained the texts in terms of their language form: he would dwell on the meaning of words (many of which were archaic), the derivation and

⁷ See Henri Irénée Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. by George Lamb (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956).

etymology of names, inflection, and syntax. Then the content was discussed: the stories behind the text according to place, time, event, and persons. This gave students a basic knowledge of classical mythology. Once all this work was done, however, a final interpretive step was envisaged, the *meros kritikon*, taught in the schools of rhetoricians and philosophers rather than by the grammarians. Here, the leading question was no longer *how* the classics should be studied, but *why*; why was Homer important? At this stage, the young minds were introduced to the ruling ethos of Greek society, the values, the norms, and the heroic models which that society embraced and drew from these texts.

Methods and rules are not enough. They are nothing more than the shared tools for fixing the obvious problems of language and its written expression, literature, but they do not reveal what this language expresses, how it functions in the mind of people whose value system is nourished by it. We need that which the *meros kritikon* was supposed to provide: an understanding of the “why,” of the expectation of what the text was ultimately going to do, of the wider frame of reference, the governing ethos; and since Homer as well as the Bible were sacred texts for the communities in which they had authority, we need a grasp of the religious goal of interpretation, of the theological parameter into which the interpretation is supposed to move the text in the mind of the hearer and reader. In order to mark the distinction, I have called this frame “principles,” probably thinking more of the Latin and Greek equivalents: *principia*; *archai*, than of the modern English word. These “principles” are close to, but not identical with the concept of *mentalité* which is the object of an exciting branch of recent historiography, the “history of mentalities”—those underlying feelings, presuppositions, unarticulated assumptions of an age which color everything and are hard to pin down. The “principles” are the tip of this immense iceberg, the part of it that sticks out of the water because it has risen to the surface of the interpreter’s consciousness. Paying attention to the “principles” of biblical interpretation means taking into account the articulated faith and hope of the interpreters as well as of the communities in which and for which they have operated.

You will notice that I do not call “principles” of biblical interpretation what many people today expect to be discussed under this heading: biblical inspiration, the canon, creedal or confessional identity, and an authoritative teaching ministry. For me, these topics do not belong under principles but are formal presuppositions shared by people and communities who are part of the history of biblical interpretation in all ages. Like Warfield’s doctrine of

inspiration, they are indispensable methodologically, but not logically. To understand the dynamics of the history of interpretation at any point, something else is needed. Together with the methods and rules, we must understand the specific form which the expectation took of how the Word of God would be conveyed and received through the biblical text in that particular situation.

VI. INTERPRETATION AS DISCOVERY

Perhaps the best example demonstrating that rules cannot be separated from underlying principles, and principles cannot be discussed without rules is Augustine's famous handbook, "On Christian Doctrine" (*De doctrina christiana*).⁸ Augustine composed it as a guide to the interpretation and use of the scriptures in the church. Having taught as a professional rhetorician himself, he does suggest a wealth of methods and rules on how to handle, even manipulate the language of scripture. Book II develops his famous theory of signs as a theory of *language* signs, and both Books II and III spell out the specifics of dealing with "unknown" and "obscure," "literal" and "figurative" language signs. On first reading, the argument of Book I seems to have nothing to do with this technical linguistic discussion. It speaks of "things to be used" and "things to be enjoyed," of the life of Christian witness, and of the double love of God and neighbor as commanded by Christ. What Augustine spells out here is not methods and rules for the analysis of language, but the principle for the sake of which the Bible exists, the theological parameter into which all interpretation should move the hearer or reader. It is this principle which allows him to declare even the Bible to be dispensable: "There are people," he says, "who do not need the Bible except for teaching others because they (already) have a firm hold on faith, hope, and love" (I.xxxix.43). It also allows him to formulate the rule that any interpretation of a biblical passage is correct if it promotes the double love of God and neighbor.

Obviously, Augustine's specific formulation of the principle was not operative in all other interpreters. For the rabbis, the interpretive parameter was given by Israel's faith in the covenant and the gracious gift of Torah as the norm of Jewish life; in the Qumran sect, this Torah was understood as the Torah of the end-time interpreted by the message of the prophets. The principles of Origen's exegesis had to do with the Alexandrian's fervent

⁸ The most recent edition with an English translation and notes is by R. P. H. Green, *Augustine, De doctrina christiana*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

interest in the fate of the human soul and his hope that this fate was determined by the saving providence of the God of Israel and of Jesus Christ. In the history of Christian interpretation, the principles always included the conviction that God’s action in the historical person of Jesus Christ was central to God’s plan of salvation, God’s *oikonomia*. Beyond that, they could show immense variation in scope, emphasis, and vital concerns.

“Aminadab’s chariot” as a reading of Song of Songs 6:12 suggests that former Christian generations did not regard biblical interpretation simply as a task of solving problems, as a bind, a predicament in which Bible users find themselves. Rather, they saw it as an opportunity. As a child, I still grew up with the legend that Martin Luther rediscovered the Bible when he found the unknown book chained in the library at Erfurt and began to read it with flaming cheeks. It may have been literally chained; there are some surviving chained libraries, and I wish theological libraries with huge book losses could have them today! But figuratively, nothing is further from the truth. The Middle Ages, particularly the late Middle Ages, was a period of unmitigated Bible enthusiasm, when people of all stripes took delight in any opportunity to interpret scripture, finding with amazement ever new levels of meaning. John the Scot had compared the multiplicity of scriptural senses to the feathers of a peacock. The *Biblia pauperum* of the fourteenth century paired scenes from the New Testament with its prefigurations from the Old Testament, two at a time. Its later imitations featured more—three, even five such prefigurative scenes. Living in the world of the Bible meant living in a symbolic universe, and this meant unlimited opportunities for discovery.

Discovery. In an article written in anticipation of the jubilee of 1992, John Fleming of Princeton University painted the portrait of Christopher Columbus as an amateur exegete who saw his discovery of the westward passage to the Orient as nothing less than a Spirit-guided act of biblical interpretation, as the implementation of a prophetic charge given to no one else but to him, a humble child of Franciscan piety.⁹ These are the crucial events as Columbus himself describes them: In the night of Christmas Eve, 1492, working out of the bowels of a stranded ship named the Santa Maria, stranded because a boy had accidentally taken the rudder, he was forced to leave some people behind on a paradisaical island, thus establishing Navidad, the first Christian settlement in the New World, among a most beautiful people, “people of love without venality.” For Columbus, doubt was impossible; what had happened

⁹ John Fleming, “Christopher Columbus as a Scriptural Exegete,” in *Biblical Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective*, 173–83.

was clearly providential, the ordained fulfillment of a biblical vision of the end-time. What else could it be? Fleming concludes:

We may put the question somewhat crudely and ask whether this account of the founding of the first, doomed European settlement in America is "history." Did all this happen *in reality*, as our typical vocabulary rather pretentiously might put it? Was there in fact a village named Navidad, and did it find its strange birth in the manner described? The answer to the first question—did Navidad exist?—is almost certainly yes; but the answer to the second question will depend, as so much in medieval exegesis depended, upon whether one speaks *literaliter* or *spiritualiter*.

How biblical interpreters over the centuries perceived the Bible speaking both literally and spiritually is exactly the concern of my remaining Warfield lectures.

Charles Hodge Revisited

by JOHN W. STEWART

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THIS PAST OCTOBER Princeton Theological Seminary commemorated the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Hodge (1797–1878), the Seminary's third professor. The Seminary and the Center for the Study of American Religion at Princeton University co-sponsored a symposium which invited scholars from American and English universities and seminaries to reassess Hodge's life and thought. Hodge taught at the Seminary for over fifty years and it is estimated that over 3,000 students sat in his classes between 1822 and 1875. Compared to other prominent theologians of America's antebellum era, such as Horace Bushnell and Charles G. Finney, Charles Hodge has received little critical analysis from historians of American thought and religion. Until the publication of the papers from the Hodge symposium in the spring of 1998, this article may serve as a brief introduction to Charles Hodge for those who have heard much but inquired little about this formidable personality in nineteenth-century American religious thought.

It is especially unfortunate that we do not have a modern, critical biography which places Hodge in his own social, ecclesial, and political environments.¹ Whatever else informs our current opinions of Hodge, he should be placed and interpreted within his historical context—both theological and cultural. His nineteenth-century ethos will make it apparent that his assumptions, worldview, and theological agenda are significantly different from our own. On the other hand, any appreciation of the American Reformed tradition can scarcely bypass this pivotal and formidable thinker. Insofar as contemporary Christian thinkers admit to learning *anything* from the past, Hodge still has a witness to bear in contemporary Christian communities.

¹ The only full-scale biography written about Charles Hodge was written by his son. See A. A. Hodge, *Life of Charles Hodge* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1880 is hereafter cited as *LCH*). I have tried to relate Hodge's early life and its role in his theologizing in J. W. Stewart, *Mediating the Center: Charles Hodge on American Science, Language, Literature and Politics*, Studies in Reformed Theology and History, vol. 3, no. 5 (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1995).

I. AN OVERVIEW OF HODGE'S LIFE

Born in the throes of the "first new nation," Charles Hodge was the son of a Scotch-Irish Philadelphia physician, who died when Charles was only seven months old. Charles was raised with his older brother, Hugh Lenox Hodge, by their widowed mother within the Presbyterian communities and cultural milieu of Philadelphia. Probably at the prompting of her former pastor Ashbel Green, elected President in 1812 of the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University), an impoverished Mrs. Hodge moved to Princeton in 1812 and took in boarders and laundry in order to garner funds to enroll her two sons at the college.² Hugh L. Hodge became a distinguished professor of women's medicine at the College (later University) of Pennsylvania, where he pioneered in the new fields of gynecology and obstetrics. He was also Charles's lifetime confidant. After graduating from college and for unexplained reasons, Charles forsook an expected career in medicine and entered the Theological Seminary at Princeton in 1816, graduating in 1819. Though ordained to the Presbyterian ministry, he did not consider himself a very good preacher and shied away from parish assignments. Instead, at the urging of Archibald Alexander, he continued his studies in biblical languages in Philadelphia with a rabbi and in New England with Moses Stuart. In 1822, he cemented his ties with the scientific and scholarly communities in Philadelphia when he married Sarah Bache, a great granddaughter of Benjamin Franklin.³ Together Charles and Sarah raised eight children, two of whom became professors at the Seminary—the theologian, Archibald Alexander Hodge (1823–1886), and Caspar Wistar Hodge (1830–1881), a New Testament scholar. Sarah Hodge died in 1849, leaving Hodge broken-hearted. In 1852, he married Mary Stockton, a widow belonging to the prominent and wealthy Princeton family. After more than fifty years of teaching and writing, he retired in 1877 and died in June of 1878 in his eightieth year.

Hodge's early educational journey in Princeton's two institutions of higher education, while solid and classical, moved to an even higher level in 1826 when, at the age of twenty-nine, he was among the very first American scholars to travel to the Continent (rather than to English or Scottish

² Hodge never forgot his impoverished upbringing. He often chided Presbyterian congregations about their abandonment of America's poor. As late as 1871, he wrote, "It is with great reluctance that we are constrained to acknowledge that the Presbyterian Church in this country is not the church of the poor." See Charles Hodge, "Preaching to the Poor," *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* (hereafter cited as *BRPR*) 71 (1871): 86.

³ There is no evidence that Charles Hodge belonged to the famed American Philosophical Society, headquartered in Philadelphia and the center of the new nation's most advanced scientific and philosophical discourse. However, his father, brother, and many of his friends at the College of New Jersey at Princeton were lifelong members.

universities) for advanced studies. He studied Semitic languages with DeSacy in Paris, Hebrew with H. F. W. Gesenius (1786–1842) and theology with Friedrich August Tholuck (1799–1877) at the University of Halle, and, in 1828, read theology and history at the University of Berlin with F. D. E. Schleiermacher (1768–1834), E. W. Hengstenberg (1802–1869), and J. A. W. Neander (1789–1850). Meanwhile, he acquired considerable facility in both French and German languages. He wrote home often, detailing his attendance at the Royal Academy of Science in Berlin and, apparently, of his encounters with many biblical critics, including G. H. A. von Ewald (1803–1875) of Göttingen. Few Americans prior to 1830 could rival such excellence in scholarly preparation and credentials. His letters home, many written in French, reveal a lonely husband and father as well as a widening circle of scholarly acquaintances. He also enjoyed learning to drink beer in German pubs, singing tunes by a newly discovered German composer (J. S. Bach), frequenting art museums and collections, and, of course, expanding his understanding of his Reformed heritage. Apparently, he traveled extensively.⁴ On his thirtieth birthday, while in Berlin, he wrote, “O my God, from my soul I pray to thee, grant me thy Holy Spirit . . . that my time may be better improved in working out my own salvation and the salvation of my fellow-men.”

Returning in 1828 to Princeton, Hodge settled into what the Seminary and the General Assembly had called him to do, namely, to teach biblical languages and literature. In addition, he recast his earlier-founded journal in order to provide American audiences with firsthand information about German biblical and theological scholarship. He renamed the journal *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*. Between 1830 and 1840, he produced three New Testament commentaries, including a popular commentary on Romans in 1835. Hodge defended his “Old School” assumptions in his *The Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, which came on the heels of the denominational split in 1837. With the publication of this scholarly volume, Hodge earned a respected place in American Presbyterian circles. In 1841, a year after he was appointed to succeed the aging Archibald Alexander as Professor of Exegetical and Didactic Theology, Hodge published *The Way of Life* (1841) for the American Sunday School Union. It was immensely popular and was translated into

⁴ In May of 1828, he wrote, “*My beloved Sarah*: I have seen the Alps! If now I never see anything great or beautiful in nature, I am content. . . . I could fall at your feet and beg you to forgive my beholding such a spectacle without you, my love. . . . This is the first moment in my life in which I felt overwhelmed. . . . This was a moment that never can return.” *LCH*, 197.

several languages. It is the best place, in my opinion, to begin any analysis of Hodge's theological assumptions and commitments.⁵

By the 1840s, Hodge had become a formidable figure in America's antebellum theological and ecclesial circles. Through his articles in *BRPR*, Hodge's reputation in the British Isles and France also grew. His lengthy encounters and repartee with nineteenth-century figures—David Friedrich Strauss, Horace Bushnell, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edwards A. Park, to name only a few—never derailed, however, his love for and connection to the Presbyterian churches in America, Ireland, and Scotland. Hodge's biographer tells of the warm friendship and lengthy correspondence Hodge maintained with William Cunningham, Principal of New College in Edinburgh. Hodge was elected moderator of the General Assembly (Old School), served frequently as chairman of various denominational boards, and was a lifelong trustee of the college at Princeton. In the late 1840s, Hodge initiated a twenty-year controversy over the nature of church membership with the South's foremost Presbyterian theologian, James Henley Thornwell (1812–1862) of South Carolina.⁶ Reading between the lines of their correspondence, Hodge and Thornwell never got along very well. Their fragile friendship was strained and then severed in 1861 over the twin issues of slavery and the Civil War. Hodge called Thornwell's doctrine of the spirituality of the church "mischievous." After publishing several other commentaries on Pauline epistles, Hodge's three volume *Systematic Theology* (1872–73) appeared with little new or revised opinions from those articulated in earlier *BRPR* articles.⁷ In all, Hodge contributed nearly 200 articles to the *BRPR* and other journals in America—all written by hand with a quill pen and many exceeded 100 printed pages.⁸ For the more zealous historian, there is an impressive—and growing—cache of Hodge's papers, manuscripts, lectures, letters, and even canceled checks in the archives of the Seminary and Princeton University.

Two aspects of Charles Hodge's personality warrant comment. First, a word about his upbringing. Hodge was nurtured in the Christian faith by a

⁵ Charles Hodge, *Way of Life*, ed. Mark A. Noll (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987; orig. 1841). The New School theologian, Henry B. Smith of Union Theological Seminary in New York City and friend of Hodge, greatly preferred this book to Hodge's later *Systematic Theology*.

⁶ In light of the considerable attention given to Thornwell by historians of the South, especially by the distinguished historian of American slavery, Eugene Genovese, Hodge's controversies with Thornwell and the South are especially noteworthy.

⁷ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986; orig. 1872–73; hereafter cited as *ST*).

⁸ Many of these essays from *BRPR* can be found in Charles Hodge, *Theological Essays: Reprinted from the Princeton Review* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1846) and, *Essays and Review: Selected from the Princeton Review* (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1856).

devout mother and by the members of her Philadelphia congregation. Almost as soon as he acquired the English language, the young Hodge became steeped in biblical literature, especially the Psalms. Very early, his theological vocabulary was shaped through memorizing the Westminster Catechisms (in both English and Latin!). That early training was supplemented but not replaced by Archibald Alexander, who clearly served as the father figure for an adolescent Charles. Hodge boarded with the Alexanders, maintained life-long ties with the Alexanders' many children, especially Joseph Addison Alexander and James Waddell Alexander.⁹ Hodge rarely wrote anything without the sanction of "the Doctor." The elder Alexander responded in kind. He wrote to Hodge in Germany, "I feel anxious to hear from you, to know how you are and what progress you are making in the literature. You must come home loaded with riches. Much will be expected of you." In light of this relationship, it is not surprising that Charles and Sarah would bypass their own family namesakes and name their first child Archibald Alexander Hodge.

While psycho-history is a precarious venture, it is tantalizing to ponder the implications of Hodge's fatherless upbringing and Alexander's role as surrogate father and watchful mentor. Whatever else typified Hodge's manner of thinking, he had a deep quest for structure and a distinct intolerance for ambiguity. Order rather than imagination characterized his commentaries and, as his quarrels with Emerson's transcendentalism and the Mercersberg theology revealed, Hodge was habitually wary of any mysticism. Surely, some of his theological need for certainty was related to his rearing.¹⁰

⁹The best biography of Archibald Alexander is Lefferts A. Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism: Archibald Alexander* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983). Very little has been published about Archibald Alexander's two sons who were extraordinary scholars in their own right. For J. A. Alexander (1809–1861), a well known biblical scholar and master of 27 languages, see Marion Ann Taylor, *The Old Testament in the Old Princeton School (1812–1929)* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Research Press, 1992) and James Moorhead, "Joseph Addison Alexander: Common Sense, Romanticism and Biblical Criticism at Princeton," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 53 (1975): 51–66. For James W. Alexander (1804–1859), a theologian, seminary teacher, and New York City pastor, see Gregory M. Anderson, "The Religious Rhetoric of James W. Alexander: Texts and Contexts of an Antebellum Rhetorical Tradition" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1994).

¹⁰There is also the tender and revealing interchange between Alexander and Hodge mentioned in *LCH*. In October 1851, Hodge was summoned across campus to the deathbed of Alexander. After telling Hodge that he could accomplish little more for the Seminary or his family and affirming that his Christian faith was secure and comforting, Alexander said quietly to Hodge, "I want you to know that it has been my greatest privilege to have brought you forward." Deeply moved, Hodge kissed him and fell on his knees to pray as Alexander had requested. Immediately after leaving, Hodge wrote a memorandum to himself to remember the occasion. See "Memorandum to Myself, Princeton, October 21, 1851," in the archives at Luce Library. This memo appears, though in slightly different form, in *LCH*, 382–83.

Second, there is abundant evidence that Hodge was a warm-hearted, gregarious and much liked person. He made friends easily and kept them for a lifetime. There are extant letters to nearly 800 different persons gathered in several archival collections. A sixty-year friendship that started in college with John Johns, an Episcopal bishop from Virginia and at one time President of William and Mary College, is just one example of Hodge's outgoing personality. "Hail Columbia," Hodge wrote to Johns in 1872. "Tell me on what train you are coming in that I may meet you. I can't afford to lose one minute." In 1872, the Seminary threw a festive party in Hodge's honor. The published speeches and documents of that occasion attest that it was an extraordinary celebration, with hundreds of distinguished persons in attendance. When Theodore Dwight Woolsey, the former President of Yale College, spoke of their long friendship that had started in 1828, Hodge, crippled and walking with a cane, walked across the stage to the podium and kissed him. His old friend, Bishop John Johns, asked Hodge how he was tolerating all the accolades, "Oh," said Hodge, "it is easy. I just pretend they are talking about someone else." The American Lutheran theologian, Charles Krauth, once said that "next to having Dr. Hodge on one's side, was the pleasure of having him for an antagonist." In 1873, in what was a very unusual move, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church meeting in Baltimore heard that Hodge was too ill to attend the Assembly and was resting in Washington, D.C. The Assembly adjourned, took a train to Washington and gathered at the Willard Hotel to sing to him and pray for his well being.¹¹

I would suggest that Hodge's vaunted conservatism needs to be understood, in part, in light of his close-knit academic community and upbringing. Tight communities can create a "horizontal hermeneutic," as one scholar has observed. His gregarious personality only intensified his commitment to his "community of interpreters" in Princeton. I doubt that one can ever separate a person from her or his theology. One clearly cannot do so with Hodge.

II. HODGE'S INTELLECTUAL INTERESTS

Though arguably the foremost Reformed theologian in nineteenth-century America, American historians remain undecided where to locate Hodge in the

¹¹ Here is how a member of that General Assembly described the occasion: "Dr. Hodge, very feeble, and showing signs of great emotion, took his seat at the head of the table. . . . This action of the Assembly touched him very deeply. When first told of the desire to thus honor him, he was almost overcome, and the cordial greetings he received on every side, he said, were among the most cherished recollections of his life."

streams of American thought.¹² As early as 1961, Sydney Ahlstrom of Yale University detailed why Hodge was such an immensely influential theologian and churchman, perhaps without peer in nineteenth-century America. According to Ahlstrom, American Calvinism would have received an entirely different shape without Hodge.¹³

While it is increasingly clear that few American theologians could match Hodge's training and range, Hodge was primarily a biblical scholar before he was either a systematic or polemical theologian. But, as I have written elsewhere, he was a *certain kind* of American theologian.¹⁴ He was inveterately mediatorial and labored to search for balance and symmetry in an age when theological energies were centrifugal and ecclesial communities often preferred to splinter rather than resolve intractable conflicts. Hodge was quintessentially American in his manner and style, that is, he sought to make his theological discourses practical and applicable to the American scene. Arguably, no other American Reformed theologian in the nineteenth century commented on as many theological, cultural, ecclesial, and political issues in the same way as Hodge did.

I first became aware of the work of Charles Hodge while preparing a paper in graduate school on the erudite Samuel Miller, the Seminary's second professor.¹⁵ I was struck then, as I have continued to be, by the volume and quality of Hodge's writings in *BRPR*. A predecessor of the current *Theology Today*, Hodge edited this influential journal for more than forty years. As a widely read and often quoted mid-nineteenth-century journal, *BRPR* covered an impressive array of biblical, theological, ecclesial, cultural, and political concerns. Few issues in America's life and thought and religion escaped its comment. Here are just a few of the topics Hodge personally addressed through his journal: *science* (phrenology, the polygenesis controversy, geology,

¹² For a fuller explanation of how both historians of American culture and historians of nineteenth-century religion have treated Hodge, see Stewart, *Mediating the Center*, 1–3. For a very helpful explanation of how Hodge fit into the life and politics of Princeton Seminary, see David D. Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary*, vol. I (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1995).

¹³ "Probably nobody in the country was so generally well-versed in all the sciences of theology." Sydney Ahlstrom, *The Shaping of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 263.

¹⁴ See Stewart, *Mediating the Center*, Chapter V.

¹⁵ Samuel Miller (1769–1850) may well have been the most gifted of all the Seminary's early professors. Miller's monumental *Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century* (1803), first delivered as lectures in New York City, is touted by many historians as America's first major treatise on the history of American ideas. He wrote over 200 books, articles, and reviews. Unfortunately, the life and ideas of Miller remain unexamined by modern historians. For a brief survey of the Miller's breadth of interests, see Anita Schorch, "Samuel Miller, Renaissance Man: His Legacy of 'True Taste,'" *American Presbyterians: Journal of Presbyterian History* 66 (1988): 71–87.

cultural anthropology, technological advances, medicine); *philosophy* (Kant, Reid, Hegel, rationalism, Romanticism); *biblical studies* (W. Gesenius, F. C. Baur, D. F. Strauss, A. Tholuck, W. Hengstenberg, the Tübingen school, Moses Stuart, Gilbert Barnes); *politics* (the national economy, theories of church and state, slavery, "just war" theories, the Civil War, Lincoln and the War, Emancipation, America and the Kingdom of God motif, Reconstruction policies); *language and literature* (J. Locke, H. Bushnell, S. Coleridge, the "metaphysical poets" of England, J. Milton, R. Burns, novel reading); and, *ecclesiology* (leadership roles, the nature of elders, ordination, Protestant-Catholic controversies, Presbyterian splits in 1837 and 1860, J. H. Thornwell's "passivity doctrine," Presbyterians and Vatican I). And I have not yet mentioned his efforts at constructive theology or his interminable polemics. To take but one example, his heated discourse with Edwards A. Park of Andover about the foundations and future of American Reformed theology dragged on for nearly 200 pages over several years. I mention these many and varied topics to emphasize how little is currently understood about Hodge's thought—its scope, complexity, and acumen.

Hodge's lively and lucid essays in *BRPR*, rather than his stodgy *Systematic Theology*, are the earliest and best *primary* sources for understanding his thought and theology. Beginning in 1825 and still writing in the 1870s, he contributed more than 140 articles to this influential journal. One wonders if he ever had a thought he did not write down! Nevertheless, these articles demonstrate Hodge's mental agility in a much richer way than the wooden and schematized *Systematic Theology*. Despite their neglect by many scholars (especially theologians), the essays in *BRPR* remain indispensable: they locate Hodge in a specific cultural/political context (antebellum American); they reveal the symbiotic relationship of his Scottish philosophical assumptions and his understanding of Reformed theology; and they give body, character, and controversy to his "Princeton paradigm."

III. HODGE'S "PRINCETON PARADIGM"

By his "Princeton paradigm," I mean Hodge's strenuous, Americanized agenda to integrate (1) all human efforts at reasoned inquiry (science, theology, politics, and ethics) *with* (2) all human behaviors and piety—and to do so, *sub species aeternitatis* or, as New England Puritans put it, "under the holy watchful Eye." *En route*, all human thought and effort were to be submissive, *where appropriate*, to the Bible. Undergirding this encyclopedic quest were explicit philosophical assumptions, namely, his unquestioned reliance on Scottish Common Sense Realism, a metaphysic that was "bred in

the bones" at Witherspoon's College. Hence, this "Princeton paradigm" simultaneously drew on four nourishing sources: the Reformed tradition (especially as informed by the Westminster Confession); American Presbyterian communities; a Scottish-bred Common Sense rationality; and the socio-political tradition of American Whiggery.

Moreover, Hodge's paradigm required the interplay of tradition, language, and reasoning. Many in nineteenth-century Protestantism, however, were realigning or jettisoning that tripartite foundation. More specifically, all Kantian-based theologies, with their unbridgeable delineation between the "phenomenonal" (the realm of science) and the "nominal" (the realm of religion) had run afoul of Hodge's way of "thinking/doing" Christianity. Hodge never tolerated the separation of human reason, faith, and feelings and that intolerance slowly sequestered him from his nineteenth-century counterparts. For similar reasons, Hodge nurtured a lifelong "love/hate" relationship with F. D. E. Schleiermacher and wrote about that quandary often. He was not unqualified to do so. Hodge was one of the few (perhaps only) American theologians who actually studied with Schleiermacher in Berlin in the 1820s. However, in ways later echoed by Karl Barth, Hodge never reconciled his "Princeton paradigm" with the philosophical Romanticism implicit in Schleiermacher. One American outcome of that alienation was Hodge's protracted and bitter dispute with John Nevin, the advocate of the fascinating "Mercersberg Theology." On the other hand, Hodge would have understood Flannery O'Connor's dig at the "modernist impulse" in American liberal Protestantism when she wrote in her *Habits of Being*:

One of the effects of modern liberal Protestantism has been gradually to turn religion into poetry and therapy, to make truth vaguer and more and more relative, to banish intellectual distinctions, to depend upon feeling instead of thought, and gradually to come to believe that God has no power, that he cannot communicate with us, cannot reveal himself to us, indeed has not done so and that religion is our own sweet invention.¹⁶

Some, like Henry James, Sr. in the 1840s, found the "Princeton paradigm" too myopic and taut; others, like Hodge's 3,000 students, found the Seminary's teachings congenial and carried them into the South, West and abroad, especially India and Korea. Hodge's *Systematic Theology* was used as a major text in several American seminaries as late as 1960. According to Samuel

¹⁶ Flannery O'Connor, *Habits of Being*, ed. Sally Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1979), 462.

Moffett, it is still the primary textbook for theology in the one remaining Protestant seminary in *North* Korea!

Nevertheless, Hodge's "Princeton paradigm" was problematic from the beginning. The demise of Scottish realism and the rise of American pragmatism, the factual evidence that Darwin supplied for his theory of evolution, and the burgeoning of biblical criticism leaned on Hodge unmercifully. By the last third of the nineteenth century, his grand and gothic system teetered under the weight and burden of its own making. While it is easy to be tolerant when one believes nothing, Hodge probably believed too much. In an era that trivialized absolutes, Hodge tended to absolutize the trivial. Nevertheless, there is no understanding of Hodge until one wrestles with paradigm. More specifically, anyone who wants to revisit Hodge's thought must, in my opinion, explain the role of Scottish Common Sense Realism. Hodge once observed that "every theology is in one sense a form of philosophy. To understand any theological system we must understand the philosophy that underlies it and gives it peculiar form."¹⁷ He was always clear about what philosophical assumptions undergirded his own thought, but he was apparently unable to adapt those philosophical assumptions when new perspectives arose and evidence poured in over the course of the nineteenth century.

IV. HODGE AND THE CHURCH

Hodge's theological vision and enterprise *required* a church. He *always* did theology with an ear tilted toward the church's tradition and an eye focused on Presbyterian well-being and responsibility. Virtually every theological polemic he started ended by referring to the church, and especially to American Presbyterians. For more than thirty years, Hodge annually wrote lengthy commentaries on the proceedings of the General Assembly (Old School) for *BRPR*. Those summaries and opinions were widely read and quoted.

While very little has been written to explain Hodge's understanding of the Church, his intense ecclesial orientation creates another hurdle for contemporary persons revisiting Hodge. In his day, Hodge had little truck with antebellum American individualism as typified by Emerson's essay on "Self Reliance"; and neither did he relish the revivalism of such notables as Charles G. Finney. The modern practice of privatizing religious commitments would be equally foreign to him. The contemporary "Sheila-isms" described by Robert Bellah would be utterly insufferable to Hodge. Likewise, the practice

¹⁷ Charles Hodge, "What is Christianity," *BRPR* 32 (1860): 121.

of current postmodern Protestants, who espouse theologies attuned to their own liking and participate in ecclesial communities on their own terms, would be incomprehensible to Hodge.

Hodge's ecclesiology extended to his understanding of America's academic institutions, including seminaries. He clearly sensed that theology pursued in solely academic settings differed fundamentally from theological discourse within ecclesial environments. He remembered often his firsthand encounters with the "free learning tradition" of German universities and concluded that their conventions were not appropriate for America's church-related educational institutions, especially seminaries. He once chaired the committee of the college at Princeton to bring James McCosh as its president for the purpose of countering the American drift toward the modern, secular university. George Marsden's recent work on American universities shows why the college and the seminary at Princeton resembled (*until the last third of the nineteenth century*) the educational stance and proclivities of Catholic universities here and abroad.¹⁸ Hodge would have endorsed Marsden's judgment and repeatedly recounted the fact that Princeton Theological Seminary itself was established as an ecclesial protest against theological laxity in American colleges.

There is another aspect to Hodge's ecclesiology worthy of comment. In 1868, during an era when Roman Catholic and Protestant relationships were nasty and shrill, several American denominations were invited by Pope Pious IX to attend the upcoming Vatican Council, where, eventually, the "infallibility doctrine" of the papacy was declared. The General Assembly voted to decline the invitation, and the delicate task of responding to the pope eventually fell on Hodge's shoulders. His handwritten letter to Pious IX, extant in Princeton University's archives and fully reprinted in the official documents of the Council, is a testimony to Hodge's irenic attitude toward Roman Catholicism. On behalf of Presbyterians in America, Hodge wrote that they considered all persons Christians "who professed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, together with their children."

In summary, attempts to revisit Hodge's theology will inevitably encounter a "high churchman," whose vision and schema for theological education began and ended with the church as the covenantal people of God. Theological education for him was to be differentiated from the educational experience in America's emerging universities. Even then, as now, many found this ecclesial orientation inhibiting.

¹⁸ See George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Non-Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

V. HODGE AND THE BIBLE

To enter into a brief discussion of Charles Hodge's beliefs about the Bible is downright perilous. These beliefs are far more complex than many suppose, and analyses of their legacy in American Christianity has been underdeveloped, taken out of context, and perennially controversial.¹⁹ According to one prominent scholar of American Presbyterianism, the early Princeton theologians—pressed by the modern skepticism, the rise of biblical criticism, and America's ecclesiastical chaos—skewed the Reformed tradition's understanding of the role and function of scripture. A contemporary Princeton theologian has maintained that Hodge and others inexcusably obscured the basis of true Christian confidence. Still another notable historian of American religion has insisted that Hodge's views of the Bible differed little from other evangelical Protestants in antebellum America.²⁰ Despite widely differing appraisals, this much is clear: (1) While Hodge was fully appraised of mid-nineteenth-century beginnings in biblical criticism, his formative and life-long convictions about the Bible antedate the rise of modern biblical criticism; (2) his elaborate theory of inspiration precedes his less explicit hermeneutical norms and protocols; (3) his confidence in the certainty of

¹⁹ Compared to English and German surveys of biblical scholarship, American historians have yet to provide a comprehensive survey of the Bible and its role in American theology and thought in the nineteenth century. There needs to be, at least, the weaving of the content of inherited tradition about the Bible's role and authority in American culture, the contextualization of the fluid American ways of thinking, the awareness and contribution of British and German higher criticism, and the changing role of the place of the Bible in the theological discourse. Henry F. May's *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) remains the best survey of the several "enlightenments" in the early nineteenth century while Lewis O. Saum's *The Popular Mood of Pre-Civil War America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980) outlines other more popular contexts. See also Mark Ellingsen, *A Common Sense Theology: The Bible, Faith, and American Society*, Studies in American Biblical Hermeneutics (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1995). See also seminal studies by George Marsden, Mark Noll, and William Hutchison.

With regard to Presbyterian-based controversies about the Bible, however, a small industry of literature has emerged. One excellent place to begin is with Jack B. Rogers, *Scripture in the Westminster Confession: A Problem of Historical Interpretation for American Presbyterianism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967); and Rogers and Donald K. McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979). A bitter reply to these two books can be read in John E. Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1982). See also, John W. Stewart, "The Tethered Theology: Biblical Criticism, Common Sense Philosophy and the Princeton Theologians, 1812–1860" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1990).

²⁰ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*; Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), Chapter 3; and Mark Noll, "Introduction," in *The Princeton Theology, 1812–1921* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 13–48. See especially George Marsden's essay, "Everyone One's Own Interpreter? The Bible, Science and Authority in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," in *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History*, eds. Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 79–100.

reason rendered a biblical reader's subjective energies dormant; and, (4) he believed that the Protestant doctrine of *sola scriptura* implied that the Bible was authoritatively sufficient not only for Christian doctrinal formation but also for the practice of Christian discipleship in both the private and public realms of existence.

Hodge's most basic beliefs about the Bible ran counter to the general tide of nineteenth-century scholarship. As Benjamin Jowett of Oxford said in 1861, modern scholarship sought to interpret the Bible like any other document of antiquity. Hodge could hardly make that concession. By the 1870s, Hodge's method of biblical interpretation, outlined in the opening chapters of his *Systematic Theology*, had become wooden, if not arthritic. Nevertheless, Hodge sought to anchor the Christian faith—and its implications for a way of life and a more just society—in an utterly reliable Biblical witness rather than in the muddy bottoms of secular rational thought or Romanticism's many moods. "If men bring the [wisdom of their] own torches around the pillar of fire, the sacred light goes out, and they are left to their own guidance; and then the blind lead the blind," he wrote in 1842. There is no appreciation of Hodge's view of scripture without integrating his understanding of the Holy Spirit's activities in the writing, reading, and application of the biblical witness. In this sense, Hodge was in the mainstream of the Reformed tradition's emphasis on Word and Spirit. "The ultimate ground of faith," Hodge repeatedly insisted, "is the witness of the Spirit." The pivotal and problematic word here is "witness."²¹

The challenge implicit in Hodge's biblical hermeneutics is not only *what* he believed about the Bible but also *why* he believed as he did. Only a few, brief responses to this pressing question can be suggested here. To begin, Hodge had a profound distaste for any sort of development or dialectical process in human thought or historical experience. I suspect this was rooted in his endorsement of a Newtonian worldview. His stout belief in the Bible as "the only infallible rule of faith and practice," was interwoven with his Enlightenment assumptions of stability, equilibrium, and order in the world of nature. Beliefs about the doctrinal unity of the Bible, its utter historical reliability *as written*, and the supernatural inspiration of its traditional authors ran counter to the "historicist drift" which dominated critical biblical studies in the nineteenth century. One can trace Hodge's uneasiness from his earliest encounters in the 1820s with the biblical critics in Germany to his watershed

²¹ Hodge, *ST*, 3:60. Andrew Hoffercker's careful book about Hodge and religious experience is suggestive and important. He maintains that the place to begin in Hodge's theology is with Hodge's doctrine of the Holy Spirit. See Andrew Hoffercker, *Piety and the Princeton Theologians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981).

article in 1857, entitled "The Inspiration of the Bible." His suspicion and chagrin is especially discernible in his caustic and dismissive reviews of several editions of *Das Leben Jesu* by the radical critic D. F. Strauss. This same predisposition emerged again in his severe critiques of Darwinism in 1874, where, incidentally, he brought up Strauss' radicalism again.²² One historian has summarized this large nineteenth-century shift as the "biologizing of history and the historicizing of biology." In this sense, Hodge was not only at deep odds with the great intellectual drift in the nineteenth century but was also unable or unwilling to envision an alternative hermeneutic for his own day.

Second, Hodge's convictions about the inspiration of the Bible were rooted in the deeper assumptions of Scottish Common Sense Realism. The Common Sense assumptions that Hodge and his colleagues appropriated included tenets such as a universality in the ways of human thinking; the reliability of human witnesses through written texts; the inherent clarity of human language; and a deep confidence in an objective world *outside* the human mind. Subject and object were always sharply delineated in Scottish Common Sense Realism. Hodge learned this philosophy while in college, but he learned how to connect it with biblical hermeneutics at the feet of Archibald Alexander and Samuel Miller. These early Princeton theologians believed, like the famed Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid, that humans needed words to think rationally. Hodge claimed it was impossible for humans to have a wordless thought. From an early tract, "The Bible in Education" (1831), to the opening chapters of his popular *The Way of Life* (1841) to the first volume of his *Systematic Theology* (1872-73), Hodge insisted that any viable theory of inspiration must extend to the words and wording.²³ Eventually, with such a view, Hodge was left with the perplexing problem of discerning how one word or verse of the Bible was more or less important than any other.²⁴

²² For an expansion of this view about Hodge and Darwinism, see Stewart, *Mediating the Center*, 36-44.

²³ Here is how Hodge put this conviction in 1857: "We can understand how a man can regard the Bible as a mere human composition; we can understand he can regard inspiration as a mere elevation of religious consciousness; but how any one holds that the sacred writers were inspired [only] to their thoughts, but not to their language, is to us perfectly incomprehensible. . . . No man can have a wordless thought, any more than there can be a formless flower. By such a law of our present constitution [a favorite common sense formula], we think in words, and as far as our consciousness goes, it is as impossible to infuse thoughts into our minds without words, as it is to bring men into the world without bodies" ("Inspiration," *BRPR* 29 [1857]: 677).

²⁴ This is, essentially, the conclusion in one of the most sobering critiques ever penned of the early Princeton theology by the Scottish theologian Thomas N. Lindsay. See his "The Doctrine of Scripture: the Reformers and the Princeton School," *The Expositor*, Fifth Series, 1 (1895): 278-95. Hodge was not unaware of this dilemma. See *ST*, 1:164.

Hodge never quite discerned why Scottish Common Sense assumptions were being abandoned during the last half of the nineteenth century. John Stuart Mill insisted that Scottish Realism was too imprecise and insufficient for the needs of science. American pragmatists, especially Charles Peirce and William James, were plowing in altogether different philosophical fields.²⁵ The philosophical categories of Immanuel Kant competed with those of Thomas Reid, despite the futile efforts of Hodge's good friend at Princeton College, James McCosh, who sought to reconcile Kant and Scottish Common Sense. The mounting empirical evidence of the human family's religious diversity and cultural pluralism—celebrated in 1893 at the famous Parliament of World Religions in Chicago—played havoc with Hodge's deepest assumptions about the uniformity of the human race and the universality human ways of thinking. This crisis of theological thought flared in the 1890s during the Presbyterian heresy trial of Charles A. Briggs. By then, Hodge's Common Sense assumptions had grown sluggish and flatfooted if not untenable. For many theologians, Kant and Hegel had subverted Reid, and American theologians, especially, were scrambling to account for the shift.

One final aspect of Hodge's convictions about the Bible should not be passed over. Employing the language of the Westminster Confession, Hodge believed that the Bible's core promises of salvation in Christ and its call to practices of Christian discipleship were plainly accessible to any person who could read it.

The Bible is a plain book. It is intelligible by the people. . . . It is not denied that the Scriptures contain many things hard to understand; that they require diligent study; that all men [*sic*] need the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to [acquire] right knowledge and true faith. But it is maintained that in all things necessary for salvation they are sufficiently plain to be understood even by the unlearned.²⁶

Hodge was deeply worried that the Bible was being relegated more and more to the domain of technical scholars, a concern that Paul Tillich and many others would reiterate a century later. Given the current state of biblical scholarship, exemplified in the current controversy over the Jesus Seminar, perhaps Hodge's fears were not unfounded.

²⁵ See especially John Diggins, *The Promise of Pragmatism: Modernism and the Crisis of Knowledge and Authority* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) and Cornel West, *The Evasion of Philosophy: The Genealogy of Pragmatism* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

²⁶ Hodge, *ST*, 1:183ff.

VI. HODGE AND THE AMERICAN SOCIAL ORDER

It is not generally recognized that Hodge was an astute observer and commentator on American social, cultural, and political life.²⁷ A tabulation of the sheer number of societal topics he addressed in *BPPR* is impressive. This willingness to engage the social and political issues of his day—whatever his particular opinions were—distinguishes Hodge, in my opinion, from the later Princeton theologians who were more intramural and narrowly focused.

Generally, Hodge was aligned with the Whig tradition in American society and politics. With notable exceptions, the Whigs, as the Republicans after them, stood in the heritage of the old Federalists (Madison, Hamilton, and John Adams) with an emphasis on national economic development, urbanized cultural values, an assertive central government, and a network of cultural institutions that transmitted values and shaped opinion.²⁸ Eventually and surprisingly, Hodge voted for Free Soiler John C. Frémont in 1856 and campaigned for the Republicans and Lincoln in the 1860s. Hodge often reiterated his intense patriotism by recalling that his physician father was imprisoned by the British during the Revolutionary War and was released by the personal intervention of George Washington. The other “mainstream” political tradition, that of the Democrats (typified by Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson), emphasized local government, a “rural” vision for America, and a strenuous commitment to individualism. The Democrats never appealed much to Hodge. He was as distrustful of “Jacksonian democracy” as he was disparaging of Charles G. Finney. It is not merely coincidence that the Democrats were strong in the South, while the Whig-Republicans were prominent in the North.

Hodge rarely backed off controversial issues of his day. Here are just a few of the issues he took on: he supported the establishment of a national bank; he affirmed Jackson's position in the “nullification controversy” with South Carolina; he called for government intervention to spur manufacturing by levying tariffs on foreign goods; he promoted the national postal system; and, he was critical of America's entry into the war with Mexico. Moreover, his many essays about the Civil War are, in my opinion, outstanding editorials. Nevertheless, his public views about women's roles in society were, by our

²⁷ For a fuller exposition of Hodge's engagement with American culture, see Stewart, *Mediating the Center*.

²⁸ The best work on American Whigs remains Daniel W. Howe, *Political Culture of the American Whigs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979). For the weaving of the Reformed theology, culture, and politics in the antebellum period, see Fred J. Hood, *Reformed America: The Middle and Southern States 1783–1837* (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1980).

standards, irresponsible if not reprehensible. In an era that witnessed the flowering of the American "women's rights movement," Hodge remained an advocate for the fashionable "cult of domesticity." While acting as a caring husband and tender father to eight children, he was totally oblivious to his own hierarchical views about social structures that unconsciously excluded women from public discourse and ecclesial offices. His views were not, of course, unusual in the Protestant or Presbyterian circles of his day but, by his own lights, he should have known better. His opposition to women's suffrage, very similar to Horace Bushnell's, was caustic and unyielding. Hodge published, and apparently endorsed, a review by Archibald Alexander of Catherine Beecher Stowe's *Letters on the Difficulties of Religion*. Alexander, with patriarchy in full force, concluded that women, "however gifted and learned [should be discouraged] from mixing in theological and ecclesiastical controversies. . . ."²⁹ Unlike his views about slavery in American society, Hodge apparently never changes his ideas about women and their leadership roles in society and churches.

Hodge's views about American slavery have stirred, confused, and disappointed many Presbyterians in his day and ours. But on this momentous American issue, his views were also multifaceted, surprisingly fluid, and often misunderstood by contemporary American historians.³⁰ Significantly, Hodge never wrote about slavery without reference to the Presbyterian Church. There were many moves and countermoves within Presbyterian judicatories to make the holding of slaves or the advocacy of slavery punishable by excommunication, a stance which Hodge opposed. Thornwell's defense of slavery led to a bitter exchange with Hodge. By 1861, prominent Southern Presbyterians openly called Hodge a traitor to the church and the Bible. Nevertheless, it was not until the 1850s that Hodge fully appreciated, in my opinion, the moral repugnancy of America's "peculiar institution." And he never acknowledged or comprehended the moral outrage of the abolitionists, even when these abolitionists were within the Presbyterian Church. For the most part, Hodge dismissed "immediate" abolitionists, in or out of the Presbyterian Church, as irresponsible and divisive. By the time of Lincoln's election, Hodge had written extensively about slavery. He proposed a long defense of the controversial Emancipation Proclamation, though, in my judgment, it was more political than moral in its thrust and argument. Accompanying his views about slavery were his ideas about race and racism.

²⁹ Archibald Alexander, "Letters . . . by Catherine E. Beecher," *BRPR* 8 (1836): 544.

³⁰ For a preliminary discussion of the larger issues of slavery and race in Hodge's writings, see Stewart, *Mediating the Center*, 71-87.

While this aspect of Hodge begs for a more extensive examination, most would concede that his assumptions about racial differences were liberal for his own day.³¹ Hodge's understanding of racial diversity in the human family inevitably requires a treatment of Hodge's understanding of scientific beginnings in cultural anthropology. He wrote often about the "Unity of Mankind" within which his views of race must be seen.³²

Hodge was also an astute observer of the Civil War and Lincoln's leadership. His brother-in-law (by Hodge's second marriage) was the famed Union general, David Hunter. Hunter rode Hodge's personal horse during the war. Hunter, apparently, arranged for Hodge to visit the Union's "war room" each May during the war years. Long and detailed letters to his physician brother in Philadelphia revealed Charles' careful following of the "second American revolution." Hodge never viewed the war as anything but a profound tragedy. When Presbyterians, like every other denomination, divided into Northern and Southern factions in 1861, Hodge lamented in July of that year that "Presbyterians were in arms against Presbyterians. . . . Our church was as divided as the country. It was a case of a mother who was called upon to take the part of one child against another. It was in vain that she urged that both were her children. . . ." ³³ He called an 1861 sermon by Benjamin Palmer (the first moderator of the "Southern Church") a "monstrous perversion" when Palmer claimed that the South's divine assignment was to perpetuate slavery.³⁴ Unlike many other intellectuals of his day, such as Emerson and Bushnell who celebrated the glories of the war and its promotion of American democracy, Hodge was stunned by the outbreak of war: "And oh, what was it but a ghastly hallucination which could lead them

³¹ The distinguished historian of the South, Eugene Genovese, put it this way: "Hodge and his compatriots looked like ultra-conservatives in Princeton and the North but looked like liberal temporizers in Columbia, South Carolina and the South." E. Genovese, *The Southern Front: History and Politics in the Cultural War* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1995), 87.

³² While commenting admiringly on Lincoln's handling of the slavery and emancipation issues, Hodge wrote, "Since all men are the children of Adam; made of one blood and possessing the same nation, therefore all are entitled to be regarded and treated as men. No symptom of permanent slavery can be justified, except on the assumption that the enslaved class are a different and inferior race. . . . From this it would follow, by parity of reason that every man who has the intelligence and moral character to proper exercise of the elective franchise is entitled to enjoy it. . . . In other words, these rights and privileges cannot justly be made dependent on the colour of the skin or any other adventitious difference." *BRPR* 37 (1865): 456-57.

³³ Charles Hodge, "The General Assembly," *BRPR* 33 (1861): 542-44.

³⁴ Charles Hodge, "Short Notices . . . [Palmer's] Thanksgiving Sermon," *BRPR* 33 (1861): 167.

[Southern politicians] to commit wholesale robbery, perjury, and treason, verily thinking they were doing God's service."³⁵

While Hodge thought America was a nation uniquely blessed by divine Providence and, as such, ought to be more intentionally Christian, he never, to the best of my information, was so patriotic or silly as to identify America with the Kingdom of God.³⁶ Ironically, Hodge political observations were never mentioned in H. Richard Niebuhr's classic work, *The Kingdom of God in America*.

VII. HODGE'S LEGACY IN THE AMERICAN REFORMED TRADITION

A thorough reassessment of Hodge and his thought, one that attends carefully to his cultural milieu and primary sources, remains to be written. Such a worthy task should not seek, however, to canonize him. His obvious faults and passé views should neither surprise nor inhibit future scholarship. And a goodly dose of a "hermeneutic of suspicion" is not unwarranted. Hodge's paradigm and much of his theology, however, cannot be repristinated across the "ugly ditch of history."

With this said, many of his Spirit-laden writings deserve and reward our reading. There are many moving expositions about the human faith journey in Hodge's writings. Two excerpts that attest to his faith and piety will have to suffice. In 1860, in an article entitled "What is Christianity?" Hodge wrote about Christ in this way:

To the believer, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the eternal Son of God, . . . is the supreme object of love and worship. All religious affections terminate in him. The believer lives in daily and hourly communion with him; relying on the merit of his righteousness as something outside of himself. . . . He looks to him as his Shepherd. . . . He longs for his personal presence and to be perfectly devoted to his service. . . .³⁷

The other quote was written for a preface of a biography of a friend and pastor in Philadelphia: ". . . the exhibition of genuine Christian experience carries with it a convincing power so much higher than that which belongs to external testimony or logical argument."³⁸

³⁵ Quoted in "American Nationality," *BRPR* 33 (1861): 639.

³⁶ An excellent place to compare the agendas for American culture and nation is in Hood, *Reformed America*.

³⁷ Charles Hodge, "What is Christianity?" *BRPR* 32 (1860): 158.

³⁸ Charles Hodge, "Introduction," in *The Faithful Mother's Reward* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1853), 3.

On another level, Hodge merits a more thorough reappraisal if for no other reason than (1) to remedy the theological amnesia that plagues contemporary Protestantism; and, (2) to appreciate what constitutes a Reformed heritage in an American rather than German or British context. In such revisiting, however, we should neither require Hodge to fit into postmodern ideological views nor genuflect as though he wrote the last word for American theology. Rather, let Hodge speak for himself. He is rarely unclear. And he still has a Christian witness to bear.

I want to conclude this introduction to Charles Hodge by allowing him to witness to his own Christian faith, a faith that both undergirds and exceeds his theological paradigm, social comments, and ecclesial legacy. Here is a prayer which Hodge offered in 1873 in New York City at the convening of the Evangelical Alliance, a predecessor of America's twentieth-century ecumenical movement:

Come, Holy Spirit, come! Descend in all Thy plenitude of grace. Come as the Spirit of reverence and love. Aid us, O God, in the discharge of the duties on which we are about to enter. We have assembled here from almost all parts of the world. We have come to confess Thee before men; to avow our faith that God is, and that He is the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the World. We are here to acknowledge that the God of Abraham and Isaac, and of Jacob is our God. We are here to confess Christ as God manifest in the flesh, and as our only and all-sufficient Saviour, who for us sinners died upon the cross, to reconcile us unto God, and to make expiation for the sins of men; and who, having died for our offenses, has risen again for our justification. We acknowledge Him as now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, all power in heaven and on earth having been committed to His hands. Thanks be to God, *thanks be to God*, that He has put on us, unworthy as we are, the honor to make this confession, and to bear this testimony to God and to His Son. O God, look down from heaven upon us. Shed abroad in our hearts the Holy Spirit, that we may be truly one in Christ Jesus.

O Thou blessed Spirit of the living God, without whom the universe were dead, Thou art the source of all life, of all holiness, of all power. O Thou perfect Spirit, Thou precious gift of God, come, we pray, and dwell in every heart, and touch every lip. We invoke the blessing of Father, Son and Holy Ghost on this Evangelical Alliance. We spread abroad our banner, in the sight of all men, with the confession which Thou has put on our lips—the confession of all Christendom. We confess God the Father to

be our Father; Jesus Christ His Son, to be our Saviour; and the Holy Ghost to be our Sanctifier; and His Word to be the infallible rule of faith and practice. Grant, O Lord, that whatever human words are uttered, this confession may be the language of every heart. And to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost be glory, now and evermore. Amen.³⁹

³⁹ See *History, Essays, Orations, and Other Documents of the Sixth General Conference of the Evangelical Alliance Held in New York, October 2-12, 1873* (New York, 1874), 11.

BOOK REVIEWS

Calhoun, David B. *Princeton Seminary, vol. 2, The Majestic Testimony, 1869–1929*. Carlisle: Banner of Truth Trust, 1996. Pp. xxi + 560. \$29.99.

David B. Calhoun's *Princeton Seminary: The Majestic Testimony, 1869–1929* is an intellectual history of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church. In the first volume, Calhoun describes the founding of the school. The second begins with his analysis of the strong foundations laid by Charles Hodge and continues the story through the fateful General Assembly of 1929 that led to the resignation of J. Gresham Machen.

The book focuses on Princeton Seminary's intellectual development. In each section, Calhoun, a master of the artful quotation, spins his tale by analyzing carefully selected essential documents. To be sure, some of these are the "classics" of the Old Princeton tradition, such as Charles Hodge's *What is Darwinism?*, B. B. Warfield's *Revelation and Inspiration*, and J. Gresham Machen's *Liberalism and Christianity*. Yet, many are documents that a scholar might easily overlook, such as chapel addresses, the speeches given at the funerals of faculty members, inaugural addresses by presidents and faculty members, diaries, and letters. The materials cited provide a sense of Princeton as a living community of competent theologians who thought deeply about what they were doing, why they were doing it, and the consequences of their actions.

Calhoun's combination of the personal and the intellectual is an important contribution to the understanding of Princeton Seminary. He shows that each generation of Princeton theologians was acutely aware of its relationship with the generation that preceded it and the generation that followed. To be sure, the intellectual dependence between the various members of the Princeton School is a commonplace in American theological history, but *The Majestic Testimony* shows that the relationship between members of the school was also a heartfelt affinity. The men of Princeton not only respected and studied each other's works; they shared each other's personal lives, each other's joys, and each other's pains. Metaphorically, Princeton Seminary was staffed by "fathers and sons" who passed the tradition along as naturally as any biological family.

The emphasis in *The Majestic Testimony* on the personal relationships between the members of the school helps to explain the passions that

surrounded the reorganization of the school in the 1920s. Psychologically, the reorganization had the emotional force of a contested divorce that tore away at the entrails of everyone involved in the decision. Like other such forcible separations, those who felt themselves most injured continued to suffer long after the others had healed. Since 1929, evangelicals have sought to establish schools that continued the Old Princeton's synthesis of fidelity, scholarship, and piety. Unfortunately, 1929 also left a legacy of suspicion and distrust.

If one of the book's many strengths is its treatment of the events around the 1929 reorganization, that is also the area of its greatest weakness. Calhoun does not treat two important players in that event, Charles Erdman and J. Ross Stevenson, with the same care and deliberation that he devotes to Machen and others involved in the crisis. The author neither clearly presents the arguments that persuaded Stevenson and, subsequently, the General Assembly, that the governance of the school needed a thorough overhaul, nor does he draw a convincing picture of Stevenson's scholarship or theology. The reader is left with a portrait of an improbable revolutionary whose belief that the modern age requires theological education to pass through "a complete adjustment" or even "a sweeping revolution" (p. 288) has little form or content. This flaw does not lessen, however, the overall quality of the analysis or the narrative. Calhoun makes Machen's rock-ribbed integrity the stackpole of his story, a symbol of the values and lifestyle of the Old Princeton. The author's choice was apt. Calhoun has told a tale in which his hero's strengths are also the fatal flaw that leads to his defeat, a curious twist on the standard plot in which the hero's weaknesses destroy his cause.

Princeton Seminary: The Majestic Testimony is an important book for both theologians and historians. Those who love the careful discussion of complex arguments and the skillful delineation of theological positions will delight in the study's sheer intellectual precision. The author's love of the life of the mind is evident in every quotation, every footnote, and every carefully planned aside. This is good intellectual history, written from the perspective that ideas matter. Equally important, Calhoun has given us a faithful narrative of an American school of thought in all its complexity. If the themes of that school have not dominated American Protestant theology, neither have those doctrines failed to find their advocates.

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Stackhouse, Max L., Peter L. Berger, Dennis. McCann, and M. Douglas Meeks. *Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995. Pp. 135. \$14.95.

This volume is the first in a new series that seeks to reconstruct Christian social ethics to take account of an increasing globalization of social relationships in which economic forces, in turn reflecting social, cultural, and spiritual influences, play a major role. Its four essays provide an overview and an initial statement of issues central to the project; later books in the series will deal with justice and the corporation; ecology, creation, and nature; and gender roles and relationships in business.

The lead essay, by Max L. Stackhouse, Professor of Christian Ethics at Princeton Theological Seminary and General Editor of the series, comprises approximately half the book and focuses on the core theme of the series: reforming Protestant social ethics for the new global society. Christian social ethics originated in the context of American liberal Protestantism and continues to reflect values and perspectives central to the faith of its origins. Yet, argues Stackhouse, it also needs to be freed from much "clutter" tracing back to past engagements and debates and to be rethought to face the present context. The breadth and complexity of this essay are suggested by the list of themes that "define the furrows of our field" and set Stackhouse's agenda: "hopes for a modified, democratic socialism; theories of liberation; concerns about the decline of the family, the rise of the corporation, and the power of the media; apparent triumphs by neo-liberals and neo-conservatives; an ideology of the 'Third World'; and a 'Green' agenda" (p. 34). In arguing how Protestant social ethics should be reformed to deal with these issues Stackhouse calls for greater engagement both with Catholic social thought and with the world religions, themes taken up in later essays in the book. The core of his approach, though, is creative analysis of the implications of major themes from the Bible and the Reformation, including freedom, holiness, human rights, economic justice, the good of the family and of life in society, and the influence of the fall on human life.

"Vice and Virtue in Economic Life," by Peter L. Berger, Professor of Sociology at Boston University, brings a Weberian analysis to the relation between the spread of Evangelical Protestantism and economic growth in Latin America and elsewhere, and between Confucianism (the "functional equivalent" of Protestantism) and development in Southeast Asia. But Berger also argues for a reformulation of the idea of economic virtue in advanced industrial economies, so that the "virtues conducive to production" are

replaced at least in part by "virtues conducive to consumption" (p. 91). Unfortunately, he does not develop the implications of the latter in any detail, focusing instead on the problem of moral discontinuity and conflict between generations motivated according to these different conceptions.

In "Reforming Wisdom from the East" Dennis P. McCann, Professor of Business Ethics at DePaul University, examines the implications for business ethics of two eastern religious traditions, classical Hinduism and Confucianism. In both he finds a concept of virtuous economic life that begins with the family or household and flows outward to the rest of society. Japan exemplifies a highly developed form of this conception, where the corporation has taken over many of the functions of the household as well as much of its "distinctive pattern of religious and moral values," so that "in many Japanese firms there is an extraordinary degree of continuity linking religious, familial, and business concerns" (p. 107). McCann concludes by suggesting that this understanding of economic life based in eastern religions provides useful resources for Christian social ethical reflection on corporate responsibility.

The final essay, "God's *Oikonomia* and the New World," by M. Douglas Meeks, Professor of Systematic Theology and Dean of Wesley Theological Seminary, is more thematically theological, arguing that resources other than commodities are necessary for life and thus cannot be provided by the market-oriented economy. Such additional resources are given through life in community, and most fully in the ideal community, the "Household of Jesus Christ," which is governed by the divine *oikonomia* and marked by a consciousness of forgiveness that inspires "a new logic of distribution called grace" (p. 125) or love. This logic stands in distinction to that of the market economy and shows the way to a fuller life than this economy alone can offer.

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Guthrie, Shirley C. *Always Being Reformed: Faith for a Fragmented World*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996. Pp. 100. \$11.00.

One of the most pressing problems facing pastors and theological educators is described with succinct accuracy in Shirley Guthrie's recent book, *Always Being Reformed*. He asks "whether and how we can maintain Christian identity and faithfulness in a pluralistic church and society without becoming exclu-

sive, intolerant and irrelevant; and whether and how we can be an open, inclusive, relevant community of Christians without losing our Christian identity and authenticity." In other words, borrowing from a similar analysis in Jürgen Moltmann's *The Crucified God* (1974), Guthrie says the church faces a double crisis: the crisis of relevance and the crisis of identity.

Guthrie is convinced that the Reformed tradition has resources for this double crisis. For example, the Reformed perspective on the confessional standards of the church—that they are provisional statements for a particular time and place open for future reworking—ought to give Christian people a certain freedom and openness. Guthrie calls this, following a phrase by Karl Barth, "the religious relativism of the Reformed tradition." The crisis of relevance is met with a kind of openness to fresh theological statements and insights; the crisis of identity is met with a continued reliance on scripture and witness to the centrality of Jesus Christ.

Another way in which the Reformed tradition can be a resource for current theological discussion is through the doctrine of the Trinity. Guthrie sees several benefits from the influence of Karl Barth's Trinity doctrine in twentieth-century Reformed confessions. These influences include a turn away from more classical interests in metaphysical definitions of the being of God and, in connection with this, a greater emphasis on the economic Trinity. Furthermore, twentieth-century Reformed confessions see the importance of Trinitarian links to other doctrines—especially concerning the power and sovereignty of God and the love and suffering of God.

Guthrie rightly rejects the familiar typology of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism in interreligious dialogue. This paradigm has led to remarkable confusion and misunderstanding. Guthrie notes that this paradigm invites rating the *religions* or comparing the *religious systems* of the world, not an approach that Reformed Christians, with their characteristic views of God's agency and involvement in the world, find helpful. Guthrie, following Barth's approach in *Church Dogmatics*, IV/3, proposes an alternative to the familiar paradigm, one that makes central the confession of Jesus Christ as the way, the truth, and the life. Paradoxically, that central confession *opens* rather than *closes* the doors to dialogue. What emerges, Guthrie believes, is a dialogue that is genuinely open to other faiths yet maintains a distinctively Christian commitment to Jesus Christ. It is not an approach that solves all problems or satisfies all customers. In fact, it is routinely misunderstood as a variant of exclusivism. But it does address the dual crises of identity and relevance identified at the beginning of the book.

Clearly written by a scholar and churchman deeply influenced by and indebted to the Reformed theological tradition, this volume does not critique this tradition. It does not call for an overhaul of its structures. This is one of the book's great strengths. Other writers, in other books, can do some of the necessary work of critique, correction, and research in historical particularities. This book is a reminder of the theological strengths and flexibilities of Reformed theology. It will be helpful to seminary students, to pastors, and to laypersons with an interest in theology.

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San Francisco Theological Seminary

Rogers, Jack. *Claiming the Center: Churches and Conflicting Worldviews*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995. Pp. xix + 222. \$15.99.

In *Claiming the Center*, Jack Rogers, Professor of Theology at San Francisco Theological Seminary, brings his extensive study of the evangelical and mainstream Protestant traditions to bear on the "decline" of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the past thirty years. In this broad-ranging tract for the times, he argues that the decline of the Presbyterian Church in particular, and all mainstream Protestant churches in general, is attributable primarily to conflicting liberal and conservative worldviews in the church. Given this case, he exhorts those in the "moderate middle" to reassert their leadership and claim the ecclesiastical, moral, and intellectual center of the church lest it divide.

Rogers posits that early American Protestantism was dominated by a worldview that, while stressing the themes of separatism, election as God's chosen people, revivalism, common sense philosophy, moralism, and millennialism, also incorporated the contrapuntal themes of ecumenical unity, internationalism, denominational control, relativity, pluralism, and social concern. In the nineteenth century, however, the twin crises of the Civil War and the advent of Darwinism conspired to undo this balance. Though most Protestants managed to maintain some kind of balance among these themes, conservatives or fundamentalists rallied around the first group of themes while liberals or modernists embraced the latter. Since the 1930s, Rogers contends, these conflicting emphases have led liberal church bureaucrats to square off with conservative grass-roots Presbyterians while moderates have remained largely silent.

Rogers thus spends the bulk of this book examining how and why the divisions between conservatives and liberals developed in the Presbyterian Church and suggesting centrist solutions to the issues at hand. In so doing the author covers a vast range of topics, eras, and individuals. English Puritanism, Martin Luther King, Jr., the Great Awakening, Pat Robertson, the 1993 Re-Imagining Conference, and Reinhold Niebuhr—to name only a few—are all considered in order to put the recent turmoil of the Presbyterian Church into broader historical and interpretative context.

Using the aforementioned six themes of early American Protestantism as an outline for his work, Rogers repeatedly encourages a middle way for the church. Rather than adoption of a militant separatism or thoroughgoing pluralism, for example, he pleads for a position of conviction with civility. Rather than interpreting the scriptures with a hermeneutic of naive realism or critical modernism, he proposes the adoption of a principle of critical realism. Rather than simply outlawing the ordination of practicing homosexuals or, conversely, endorsing homosexual activity, the church should affirm the Christian norm of sexual expression within the bond of marriage between a man and a woman while also allowing for the ordination of practicing homosexuals. By adopting such middle positions, the church, Rogers insists, can regain its bearings and live faithfully in the modern world.

At the outset of this work, Rogers posits that mainstream churches are “to root people in the biblical tradition and to enable them to cope with the modern world.” As his efforts to find a middle way indicate, he is profoundly concerned that the church remain grounded in its core ecumenical convictions (articulated, for Rogers, in the Apostles’ Creed) while seeking to grapple with contemporary concerns.

Rogers demonstrates an admirable command of the vast, recent sociological and historical literature that addresses the plight of the mainline in the late twentieth century. Sometimes the characters and movements considered are so disparate that the plot seems to fade, but the author, for the most part, makes connections well.

Rogers’ plea for the Presbyterian Church to claim its centrist heritage and avoid schism is well taken and will find support among many in the church. Many of his proposals, such as his suggestion that the church adopt a hermeneutic of critical realism, have a compelling internal integrity. Others, however, especially his recommendation surrounding the ordination of practicing homosexuals, take on the air of unstable political compromise. In the end, *Claiming the Center* does help clarify the evolution of current conflicts in

the Presbyterian Church and offers constructive proposals worthy of consideration.

Bradley J. Longfield
University of Dubuque Theological Seminary

Van der Ven, Johannes. A. *Ecclesiology in Context*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996. Pp. 527. \$29.00

Johannes van der Ven, the author of *Ecclesiology in Context*, is one of the leading practical theologians in the world today. Since practical theology almost everywhere is undergoing a transformation and significantly widening its scope, van der Ven's status within that discipline makes him worthy of the attention of all serious theology. A master of the content and methodologies of the social sciences, he is also a knowledgeable moral theologian and philosopher of religion with leanings toward the empirical philosophy of religion of the older Chicago school. He reads the theological and social science literature of five languages and teaches and writes in these languages as well. He is a master of interdisciplinary theology. He is theoretical, almost to a fault, but equally concrete, hard-headed, and practical. He is Dutch by nationality, Catholic in faith, cosmopolitan, and ecumenical in spirit. He is a major Christian intellectual whom American theologians, ministers, and lay people should come to know.

Ecclesiology in Context is van der Ven's first book published by an American press. It develops a commanding theology of the church and locates it squarely within the context of the modernization and secularization of contemporary societies. The reader will find in this book one of the best discussions of the concepts of modernization and secularization available in either social science or theological literatures. Take, for example, van der Ven's discussion of modernization: he analyzes not only economic modernization (the rationalization of means-end procedures for economic control) but political, social, and cultural modernization as well. Most reviews of modernization theory touch only one or two of these four kinds of modernizing processes.

These multiple forms of modernization work to differentiate and specialize all social institutions, weaken the power of institutional religion, and relegate the church to the margins of social life. The church, at best, becomes only one institution among many and must learn to gain its influence through commu-

nication, dialogue, persuasion, and by performing its various functions with such excellence as to command respect. Modernization, and the related phenomenon of secularization, constitutes the context of the contemporary church. It is only in relation to this context, van der Ven argues, that we can understand the functions of the church today.

Van der Ven claims in this book to be interested primarily in the praxis or functions of the church in contrast to its nature or essence. He identifies one "general function" of the church and four "core functions." The general function is "religious communication" about God's saving action in the world. The general function of the church is realized by the four core functions—namely identity, integration, policy, and management.

The author derives these functions from a critical reappropriation of Talcott Parsons' structural-functional theory of social action. Parson's categories of latency, integration, goal attainment, and adaptation are applied to the ecclesia and provide the conceptual framework for explaining the four core functions of the church.

Sociology sets the context and provides the categories of explanation, but it does not, in van der Ven's opinion, provide the content or meaning of the church's praxis. Theology does that. Because the processes of modernization provide the most comprehensive context of the contemporary church, the social forms of denomination and association become important lenses through which to analyze the church's tasks. But the theological models of church as people of God, community of believers, body of Christ, the building of the Spirit, and the Jesus movement provide the communicative content of the general and core functions of the church.

This is a challenging book, but one well worth the effort. The seminary student should tackle it under the supervision of a knowledgeable professor. Ministers and denominational leaders should read this book in groups over a period of several weeks and allow its complexity and richness to sink in.

Digesting this book will deepen immeasurably the reader's understanding and appreciation of the praxis of the church in contemporary society. The reader will understand the church better, believe in it more, and take it all the more seriously. It is an extremely valuable book that will play a crucial role in the renewal of the church.

Don Browning
Center of Theological Inquiry

Russell, Letty M., and J. Shannon Clarkson, eds. *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996. Pp. xxix + 351. \$39.00.

In the 1970s the paucity of feminist theological texts spurred Rosemary Radford Ruether to begin writing her own. In the 1980s a professor could still cover most of the major works on feminist theology in a single course. But today, at the turn of the millennia, feminist theology no longer lies at the periphery of the discipline of theology. With 179 feminist theologians writing on over 300 topics ranging from "Trinity" to "post-Christian," and from "Bat Mitzvah" to "Minjung," the publication of the *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies* concretely illustrates that feminist theology is a formidable player in the theological field. This volume clearly reflects the diversity and richness of feminist theology, effectively representing its history, major themes, and current areas of growth.

Editors Letty Russell, a minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Professor of Theology at Yale Divinity School, and J. Shannon Clarkson, Assistant Professor of Education at Quinnipiac College, successfully bring together an exceptional range of feminist voices while clearly emphasizing concerns shared by all feminist theologians. Eight essays under "Feminist Theologies" highlight feminist theologies that have emerged in particular contexts: Asian, European, Jewish, North American, Pacific Island, South Asian, African, and Latin American. While representatives from different feminist communities certainly challenge one another, feminist theologians from similar contexts also offer varied understandings of God, the relevance of classic religious texts, and the value of traditional theological approaches (compare, e.g., Daphne Hampson's essay on "monotheism" with Elizabeth Johnson's on "God"). And yet virtually every contributor, regardless of context or theological perspective, touches on each of the following topics: (1) distortions caused by patriarchy that impede the full humanity of women; (2) retrieval of women's experiences of the divine as vehicles of healing; and, (3) the relationship of these experiences to the work of social justice.

The contributors are also willing to critique and improve feminist theologies. For example, Nancy Duff in her entry on "Mothers/Motherhood" acknowledges that feminist theology has sometimes unduly minimized the value of motherhood and the contributions of women who have participated, as mothers, in the work of world-making. Similarly, in her discussion of

womanist theology, Delores Williams explains how feminist theologies grounded in the experiences of white women can tend toward racism. Both authors suggest that continued dialogue among those with different life experiences is essential to the work of achieving ever-broader inclusivity.

The volume is well-organized for research. The entries contain cross-references to one another, thus highlighting key feminist authors and texts relevant to comprehensive study of an issue. A bibliography of all works cited is included at the end of the volume, and will certainly prove helpful to professors developing syllabi or pastors who remember reading Ruether or Daly in seminary but want to explore more recent developments.

Surprisingly, there is no entry devoted solely to "God-language," although some consideration is given to the topic in various essays, including those on "God" (Johnson) and "Metaphor" (Mollencott). This is an unfortunate omission, for the question of whether we can properly call God "Mother" readily evokes discussion of feminist theology. Notably, a very "teachable" insight into this issue is hidden away in editor J. Shannon Clarkson's essay on "Parasitic Reference." "Just as people say, 'Hand me a Kleenex,' when they want a tissue," Clarkson wittily notes, "they also invoke the term *Father* when they are referring to God."

While the volume's diversity is a strength, it might cause confusion for Christian ministers, theologians, and laypeople who expect to find unified guidance toward understanding the relationship between Christianity and feminism. The range of representative perspectives demonstrates that Christian feminists often differ in their theological positions from those who are post-Christian or from other faith traditions. At the same time, suspicion that aspects of some feminist theologies are incompatible with classic claims of the Christian tradition finds support. Study of this volume will help Christian believers find a middle way between rejecting feminist theology outright as incompatible with Christianity or accepting feminist theologies uncritically because they address long-neglected human needs. Used thoughtfully, the *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies* can serve not only to clarify the themes and complexities of feminist theologies, but to provoke further exploration of what it means to identify oneself as both "Christian" and "feminist."

Cynthia L. Rigby

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Childs, James M., Jr. *Ethics in Business: Faith at Work*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996. Pp. ix + 165. \$13.00.

Lutherans know why it is hard to write a book that addresses "Christian ethics" in concert with "business ethics." Their great reformer, in some contrast with his contemporary Calvin, expected no direct translation of Christian faith, hope, and love into the sin-fractured world of government and economy. All the more remarkable, then, that James Childs, Professor of Ethics at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, would subtitle this book "Faith at Work," especially when the book openly aspires to relate love and hope, too, to Christian behavior in the rough world of corporate competition.

The book may not be a sharp departure from the classic Lutheran disposition to distinguish the works of love in the church from the works of justice in the marketplace; but it is a departure. I admire Childs' care in demonstrating that there will always be a tension between what Christians can be and do in modern corporate life and the contrary pressures of that life. One must not expect to "Christianize" business, he contends. But business, like government, says he, can be "an order of vocation and anticipation" for people who work faithfully in it. Faith means that God, not our work, saves us. Anticipation means living by one's glimpses of God's future will for creation and human history; it means joining a pilgrimage, not settling down in a work slot. Theologians have sometimes spoken of "an eschatology in the process of realization." That theme seems to pervade Childs' vision of Christian ethics. It adds dynamic force to his version of Christian vocation in the modern world of work.

The subject of business ethics has recently become an academic growth industry. One virtue of the Childs book is that he has read a long shelf of the current literature, and he appropriates its wisdom generously. But he beats a steady trail between a secularism that scorns theological input and a theology that has nothing to learn from secular sources. He propounds an "ethics of dialogue" between many sources: between the "norms of love," shifting economic circumstance, and the interests of all stakeholders in corporate production and distribution. Along the way, he attends to issues like the conflict between sheer self-interest and the interest of the neighbor, the importance of having a job without immersing one's selfhood in it, the limit and scope of love in corporations and markets, the indispensable role of ethical character (in contrast to ethical rules) for personal and organizational

ethics, and the challenges that face whistle-blowers, women, and ethnic minorities in a national society becoming irrevocably more pluralistic.

Among the most valuable sections of the book are several "beyond" analyses towards the end: "Beyond Affirmative Action," not by abolishing it but by discerning its meaning as a stage in an American realization of "a dominant heterogenous culture," as a "sign of equality in a pluralistic world"; "Beyond Certainty," that is, towards ethical learning that is unruffled by uncertainty because "the gospel promise is our certainty beyond" what we often call certainty; and "Beyond Market Logic" by refusing to determine the whole of life by attributing to everything a price. A price system exists to protect the priceless: democratic and theological theorists should agree to that. It is high time for economists to agree to it, too.

Not always easy reading, this is a book for stretching the thinking of pastors and laypeople already stretched by economic anxiety, job changes, and bewilderment at what a global economy may hold next for billions of us. The book is unusual in its careful balance between theological and economic perspectives, between truths ancient for Christians and Jews and new circumstance that envelops us all. Were I pastor of a congregation full of members who work at some level of business firms, I would consider inviting a dozen of them to meet with me monthly around lunch to discuss one chapter a month from this book's ten chapters. Such discussion will lead rapidly from these printed pages to reflection galore around the table.

Donald W. Shriver, Jr.
Union Theological Seminary

Christians, Clifford G., Mark Fackler, and Kim B. Rotzoll. *Media Ethics: Cases and Moral Reasoning*. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers USA, 1995. Pp. xiv + 350. \$32.50.

Clifford Christians is Professor of Communications at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; Mark Fackler is Associate Professor of Communications at Wheaton (Illinois) College; and Kim Rotzoll is Dean of the College of Communications and Professor of Advertising at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Christians and Fackler both hold degrees in theology as well as communications, and Rotzoll has degrees in advertising, journalism, and sociology. Together, their expertise combines theology and communications and provides a lens through which they examine ethical questions surrounding the news, advertising, public relations, and entertainment media in American society.

The introduction outlines basic approaches to making ethical decisions, beginning with a discussion of values and their place in our moral reasoning. Our values, according to the authors, provide a frame of reference that enables us to make decisions. The authors give definitions and examples of five ethical guidelines: Aristotle's golden mean, Kant's categorical imperative, Mill's principle of utility, Rawls' veil of ignorance, and the Judeo-Christian imperative, "Love your neighbor as yourself." They then ask the question, "To whom is moral duty owed?" to which they suggest various categories of obligation, such as duty to ourselves, duty to our organization, duty to colleagues, and duty to society. The rest of the book consists of actual case studies that pose ethical dilemmas, with attention to how the ethical guidelines and moral obligations can be useful for addressing those dilemmas.

The case studies are divided into four sections. The section on news looks at topics such as truth telling in journalism, invasion of privacy, and social justice. The section on advertising presents cases including cigarette advertising and marketing to children. The segment on public relations examines the conflict inherent in the role of being both advocate and information source for a corporation, and the cases in the entertainment section include violence in rock lyrics and sex on cable television. In each case, the authors try to show how the ethical guidelines could function in decision making. Their interest is not so much to judge the rightness of a decision as it is to examine the ethical process involved in making the decision.

The guidelines given by the authors provide a basic introduction to ethics. With little or no previous exposure to ethics, the reader can begin applying various ways of moral reasoning to these very familiar situations. Many of the cases come right out of today's headlines. Although a few of them might interest only those working in media, the majority of the cases examined in *Media Ethics* are directly relevant to most people's lives. Anyone who reads a newspaper, watches television, or responds to advertising by buying a product is obligated to engage the ethical questions involved in these actions.

The information age is upon us, raising ethical issues that demand attention. The church thus far has had little to say in this area. With the media so much a part of modern life, and with so little being written on ethics in the media, especially from a theological perspective, this book makes a good resource for individual or group study.

Carolyn Herring
New Brunswick, NJ

Ellison, Marvin M. *Erotic Justice: A Liberating Ethic of Sexuality*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 142. \$17.00.

My hometown newspaper, the *Des Moines Register*, recently commented, "State lawmakers seem obsessed with sex this year. There are bills dealing with abortion, outlawing nude dancing, teaching homosexuality in the schools, and preventing teen pregnancy. Sometimes the debate gets so hot and heavy that lawmakers get tripped up. Like the time one suggested that the way to get teen-agers not to have sex was to have them get married. And recently the house Speaker referred to sex-education programs as 'abstinence prevention.'" It is clear that it is not only in state houses that confusing and polarizing rhetoric about sexuality abounds. More words and increased volume with less clarity and further polarization seem to characterize discussions about sexuality, ethics, and the public sphere today.

With relief and gratitude, then, I read Marvin Ellison's new book, *Erotic Justice: A Liberating Ethic of Sexuality*. In this articulate, passionate, and very accessible short volume, Ellison succeeds better than any other Christian ethicist I know in explicating the complicated context of our day and developing a liberating sexual ethics within a framework of social justice.

As co-author of the 1991 Presbyterian sexuality study document, *Keeping Body and Soul Together: Sexuality, Spirituality, and Social Justice*, Ellison is a veteran of many years of debate and struggle around issues of sexuality and especially homosexuality in church and society. He understands the complexity of these issues, and knows that naming the problem correctly is the key starting point for good ethical analysis. "Everywhere in this culture people realize that sexuality and family life are in crisis, but no consensus exists about the nature of the problem or its solution . . . we need an alternative discourse that understands the political, as well as the personal, dimensions of this crisis."

Key to understanding where the moral problem lies is recognizing "sexual injustice, not sexuality, as the moral problem in this culture." Hence Ellison begins by proposing a shift in Christian ethical-thinking from a love-centered liberal ethic which traditionally has privatized sexuality as a concern for individuals, to a justice-centered liberation ethic that connects people's personal experience with larger socio-cultural dynamics. Particularly important in this is recognizing how the increasing globalization of capitalist economies has led to a thorough commodification of sex and sexuality, distorting or blocking the capacity of the erotic to serve as a vehicle of justice and mutuality.

A distinctive contribution of *Erotic Justice* is Ellison's structural analysis of how sexuality in our culture is thoroughly interwoven with ableism, racism,

sexism, and heterosexism. Ellison goes beyond the "isms" labels to examine the concrete dynamics of how each functions to reproduce eroticized relations of power, domination, and control in distinctive ways.

With this problematic context, where do we turn for sources to construct a liberating Christian alternative? Ellison provides a concise and incisive analysis of the shortcomings of traditionalist, libertarian, and liberal responses, and then draws on insights of feminist, antiracist, gay and lesbian, and profeminist men's movements to lay out an ethic that is both sex-positive and anti-abuse. Learning from those on "the underside of history" means shifting the moral task from an *apologetic* to a *reconstructive* project: "The more substantive work [of liberating moral praxis] is to change the rules of church and society that rank differences in terms of superiority and subordination. . . . The fundamental ground rule for liberating sexual ethics is that voices from the margins must be brought into the center of the conversation *on their own terms*." Key to this is for men actively to engage in confronting male violence. Ellison's chapter on "Securing the Sanctity of Every Body: Men Confronting Men's Violence" is the best single essay I have read on this critical issue.

Ellison's book is especially strong in drawing on the moral wisdom of gay people to move beyond a single-minded focus on struggle to foster an erotic "spirituality of earthly delight." To a wonderful extent he succeeds. My only critique is that I wish he would more explicitly connect erotic justice with ecological justice. A critique of anthropocentrism, our self-centered isolation from and oppression of the earth and otherkind, would reveal more clearly the eros of the earth. It is not only our erotic connection to our bodies and to others in mutual relation that should ground a liberating sexual ethic, but our erotic connection to the earth itself.

Still, this is a marvelous book, one that should be required reading for all who care about the integrity of our bodies and our relationships, in both church and society. Discussion about sex and sexuality needs to go far beyond legislation about "abstinence prevention." *Erotic Justice* provides much ethical wisdom for the conversation.

Daniel T. Spencer
Drake University

Loveland, Anne C. *American Evangelicals and the U.S. Military, 1942-1993*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996. Pp. xv + 356. \$55.00.

Anne Loveland offers a well-written narrative, thoroughly documented and flavored with a wealth of human interaction and personal detail. It traces the

history of conservative and evangelical Christians' "mission to the armed forces" and their quest for a role in shaping American public policy through recognition, access, and influence in the federal government. The context of the narrative is the national drama of competing religious institutions, ideologies, personalities, and priorities. The content of the narrative tracks the efforts of conservative, evangelistic Christian organizations and personalities as they endeavor to influence the military chaplaincy, military and governmental personnel, and affect decisions regarding national issues and priorities.

The narrative evokes diverse perspectives on numerous theological and political issues as articulated by key personalities of the time. Many of the issues are specific to the times, such as the conduct of the Vietnam War and the immorality of Mutual Assured Destruction as a defense policy. Other issues recur periodically, such as the use of public office or military position to disseminate personal religious or moral beliefs, ecumenical pluralism vs. sectarian proselytizing in the military chaplaincy, homosexuality in the military services, and the use of tactical nuclear weapons. A few issues are timeless, such as the threshold between obedience to divinely constituted governmental authority (Rom 13:1-7) and civil disobedience (Acts 5:29), and the separation of church and state. Throughout the narrative, extensive footnotes document materials from a wide range of religious journals, personal interviews, military archives, and personal papers, giving an immediacy and vitality to the record of these national debates.

The use of biographical and anecdotal materials also adds human interest to the narrative as it depicts the interactions of the well noted. Billy Graham's unique relationship with multiple generations of presidents is given texture as he is seen balancing political neutrality with the prophetic task of questioning White House policy during the Vietnam War. Ronald Reagan is seen asking Jerry Falwell to help sell the Strategic Defense Initiative to the conservative and evangelical Christian population by appealing to a premillennial eschatology popularized by Hal Lindsey. The narrative also introduces the reader to military leaders who epitomize the evangelical mission to the military. The testimony of Generals John A. Wickham, William K. Harrison, Harold K. Johnson, and numerous accounts of the growth of "spirit filled" prayer meetings and Bible study groups in the Pentagon, service academies, and military installations throughout the world give evidence of their successful campaign.

No matter how unnerving the reading of this material may be for some, the author provides a valued service by a clearly documented and well-written

narrative which identifies and traces the actions of conservative, evangelical Christians as they undertook to influence public policy during this pivotal period of national history.

Wayne R. Whitelock
Princeton Theological Seminary

Weber, Hans-Ruedi. *A Laboratory for Ecumenical Life: The Story of Bossey, 1946-1996*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996. Pp. viii + 145. \$12.95.

Bossey is unique. It is an old chateau on a lake in Switzerland, about twelve miles from Geneva; it is also the study and conference center, the Ecumenical Institute, of the World Council of Churches. For fifty years Christians from every communion and every continent have come there to work out together the form of the church's unity, its mission, and its service to God in the world. Church leaders—lay and ordained—pastors, missionaries, evangelists, teachers, politicians and scientists, doctors and nurses, lawyers, social workers, church members, and students of all kinds have taken part in its courses and consultations. Nearly every significant personality in Christendom, along with thousands of believers in all walks of life, have visited, taught, or studied at Bossey during these years. There is probably no other place where ecumenical community among Christians from all parts of the world is so deeply and fully cultivated.

Hans-Ruedi Weber tells the story of Bossey in this book, as only he can do it. He was part that story almost from the beginning, and his memory of friendships with older ecumenical leaders reaches back to early efforts toward such an educational center before the Second World War. He took part in a Bossey ecumenical youth conference in 1948. He was a student in the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies there in 1954. He served as Associate Director of the Institute for ten years, and throughout his career as Secretary of the Department on the Laity, and later of Biblical Studies for the World Council of Churches, worked closely with it. His history is full of the lore, the anecdotes, and the personalities of Bossey, rooted in his own experience. It is also full of careful accounts of the themes and problems of the many conferences and consultations held there. The reports of these meetings—an invaluable resource—are listed in Appendix C of the book.

There is one thing, however, even a veteran ecumenist like Weber could not do: he could not impose on this history more unity than it really had. The Ecumenical Movement is just that: a movement, not a church. The basis of the World Council of Churches states that it is "a fellowship of churches

which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit." But this expresses a faith, a community, and a hope that is beyond all concrete expressions. Every conference, every project, every prayer in ecumenical work tries to realize it in part amid the diversities and divisions of its member communions and the worlds they live in. So also with Bossey. It is a place of meeting for all Christians in a neutral setting, strange to all and dominated by none. The countryside is Swiss. So is the food in the dining hall. But the fare in the lecture hall, in the study groups, and in the chapel, is open to experiment and sharp encounter in the search for a community and a mission that only God can give. Weber quotes one participant as saying that each conference is an event and a risk. Not every meeting succeeds in finding spiritual unity. When one follows the sequence of meetings through the years one does not necessarily find themes consistently pursued. Although part of its program is a Graduate School, Bossey is not a research center but rather, as one observer put it, more a place of encounter where Christians meet and learn from each other, coming from different cultures, confessions, and social convictions, in the shifting panorama of history.

So this history of the Ecumenical Institute, like that of its parent Council, does not have a sharp focus. If there is an underlying theme, a *cantus firmus*, it is the humanly inexplicable reality of the Holy Spirit working through our diverse and conflicting ways of worship, of social analysis, of Bible study, and of theology, producing a variety of results whose pattern we are still trying to discern. When a participant goes home from a Bossey course so shaken up, and so deepened, something ecumenical has happened. This is the story Hans Ruedi Weber has to tell.

Charles C. West
Princeton Theological Seminary

Preuss, Horst Dietrich. *Old Testament Theology*. 2 vols. Trans. Leo G. Perdue. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995-96. Pp. xii + 372; x + 438. \$34.00 each.

These volumes, originally published in German in 1991-92, are ably translated by Leo G. Perdue and included in The Old Testament Library series. Preuss, who completed this work shortly before his death in 1993, had earlier made several important contributions to the theological interpretation of the Old Testament.

Standing in the tradition of Walther Eichrodt (whose *Theology of the Old Testament* is also published in this series), yet shaped by the work of Gerhard von Rad, Preuss offers a "systematically oriented" cross section of the theology of the Old Testament. The result is neither a new approach to Old Testament theology, nor a substantively new direction in thinking about particular theological matters. The greatest value of these volumes lies in the review of a generation of scholarship on a wide range of texts and theological issues—a kind of update of Eichrodt. This scholarship, however, is predominantly European, especially German, and seldom takes North American conversations into account.

Preuss views the center of the Old Testament and its fundamental structure of faith to be less an idea than an activity. He states this center in somewhat awkward terms: " 'YHWH's historical activity of electing Israel for communion with his world' and the obedient activity required of this people (and the nations)" (1:25). God's electing activity is broadly conceived and encompasses such matters as covenant, the giving of law and land, and salvation. Election and obligation belong together.

After a survey of the history of the discipline, Preuss orders his presentation in four parts (two parts in each volume): laying the foundations regarding the election and the obligation of the people; Yahweh as the subject of election; "additional objects" of God's electing activity (ancestors, kingship, Zion, priests and Levites, prophets); the "results and consequences of election experienced in history" (anthropology, ethics and ethos, worship, future hope, the chosen and the nations). The rationale behind the specific placement of themes among and within these major sections is often less than fully developed. For example, in the part regarding God, it remains unclear why the treatment of such matters as revelation and anthropomorphism is so delayed.

In pursuing theological matters, Preuss gives most attention to the perspectives of various traditions regarding the topic under discussion (e.g., Deuteronomist, prophets, wisdom), noting diversity more often than continuity. Pertinent discussions of the history of Israel's religion and of the sociocultural environment are also introduced along the way (e.g., the history of the priesthood). Even with these considerations of historical matters, however, the overall result is a somewhat static presentation. Discussions of various words and themes tend to be examined one by one in almost dictionary-like fashion, with little integration and uncommon gathering sections. When the latter do occur (e.g., regarding God [1:246-49]), they tend to be summary in

character rather than constructive. It would have been interesting, for example, to see how Preuss' helpful claim that the Old Testament "knows nothing of God's changelessness" (1:249) would affect his entire discussion regarding God or that of prayer (2:245-50), or, how that discussion would be affected by his important claim that the human is God's "partner" (2:114-17). He apparently does not see the theological impact of such claims on all considerations of the Old Testament imaging of God.

Regarding specific themes, one could engage Preuss' interpretations at many points. For example, in a relatively brief section, Preuss gives creation a decisively secondary status. Creation "cannot be of special importance" within a theology of the Old Testament. Eliminating the idea of "world order" as basic to Israel's creational reflections (cf. H. H. Schmid), creation is subsumed under historical categories, as "historical act" and "an extension of salvation history" (1:236-37). This is but one instance where he leaps over or sets aside more recent discussions, and more traditional scholarly perspectives on theological matters remain securely in place.

All in all, I would value these volumes primarily for their convenient gatherings of research and as a kind of theological dictionary on various themes and topics.

Terence E. Fretheim
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Brown, William P. *Character in Crisis: A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996. Pp. xi + 179. \$17.00.

When I first saw the title of William Brown's book, I was suspicious. The title hinted at simplistic commentary on U.S. culture that might use the Bible to blame individual moral failure for social ills without regard to societal influences. I was wrong. Brown, a professor at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, has written a thoughtful study of the wisdom literature that distances itself from the individualism that has eviscerated our moral discourse. Like biblical wisdom, the author attempts to keep the individual and community in tandem.

For Brown, the term "character" is a complex interpretive tool in two senses. First, character is a literary term that designates those figures with identifiable traits who "assume roles within narratives." Brown studies surprising literary characters, including the implied reader figured as a young man,

the father, friends, Job, God, Qoheleth, and even creation. Second, character refers to "the sum and range of moral qualities" possessed by a person or a community. Brown describes humans as rational beings with perception, intelligence, and desire, qualities that are integrated in a moral person by virtuous living. In Brown's assessment, Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes are primarily literature that constructs, reflects upon, and reconceives moral character. Brown's book, therefore, provides important biblical perspectives for contemporary ethical conversations about the relationship of individual character to society.

This approach draws out many elements of the wisdom literature usually left to the margins of interpretation, even though wisdom's pedagogical intentions are well known. In Proverbs, for example, Brown foregrounds the narrative thread that leads the "implied" young male reader from his father's house where he learns virtue (chaps. 1-9) to his own house where he dwells with wisdom as a mature and virtuous citizen (31:10-31). Sayings at the book's center (chaps. 10-30) provide specifics for right living.

Brown understands Job as a story of the deconstruction and reconstruction of Job's character. Job begins as a man of integrity, but that integrity seems to dissolve under attacks from his friends, although Job never relinquishes belief in his own integrity. After the encounter in the storm, however, Job discovers God's character to be other than he had previously believed, and Job too is transformed. No longer the obsessive figure of the prologue, Job of the epilogue is a compassionate, socially responsible, and worshipful character of true integrity.

Brown's most original contribution may be his interpretation of Ecclesiastes. As a literary character, Ecclesiastes is remote from the world, a distant, cynical observer who himself is guilty of the wastefulness he blames on others, "chasing after the wind." By imparting advice to live simply and joyously, however, Ecclesiastes becomes an engaged ethical character able to instruct others. The rhetorical aim of Ecclesiastes' book of dissent and resistance, therefore, is to reconstruct character.

Because Brown illuminates biblical wisdom in "fresh" ways, his book would make a provocative introductory work for college and seminary students and for pastors. But Brown's character study is like the shoe into which Cinderella's stepsisters try to squeeze their feet. There is a foot and there is a shoe, but the latter cannot contain the former. Brown's insightful readings restrict interpretation rather than expand it because he tries to fit wisdom into too small a shoe. The book of Job may well be a story about the reconstruction of

Job's character, but it also investigates human suffering and the divine-human relationship in the midst of suffering. Ecclesiastes may teach joy, but it can also be read legitimately as a book of despair. Proverbs is surely a book about virtues, but it also speaks of personified wisdom as divine revelation in creation. To fit the wisdom books into the lens of character, Brown not only suppresses parts of biblical books but also denies other equally strong and compatible interpretations of the wisdom texts. He fills in "the gaps" for readers without granting the plausibility of other readings. Rather than highlighting an important and overlooked component of the wisdom literature, Brown attempts to produce another univocal reading.

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Anderson, Bernhard W. *From Creation to New Creation: Old Testament Perspectives*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994. Pp. xvi + 256. \$16.00

This volume contains a collection of essays that appeared in various publications or as lectures between 1955 and 1993. The earliest essays were revised during the early 1980s so that all essays are in a form written or revised after 1974. The volume thus represents Anderson's consideration of the theology of creation over a long period of time. He has been able to go both wide and deep, so that this single volume gives the reader both a grasp of the range of issues to be considered in developing a theology of creation and Anderson's careful consideration and reconsideration of these issues.

The essays are arranged to move from a concern with the general questions to be addressed in a theology of creation, through the priestly accounts of creation and flood, to the specific issues important in the creation material in Genesis, on to a wider look at creation references in the Old Testament, and finally to creation and apocalyptic. Though the first chapter is a revision of the earliest essay in the collection and the last chapter is a publication for the first time of a 1993 lecture, the order of the essays is not chronological. The reader will want to refer to the author's notes on pages xi-xiii to check the dates when the essays were first published and last revised in order to appreciate how Anderson's understanding of the texts and issues has developed over a period of almost forty years. There are a number of issues for which this is particularly important.

Anderson, along with many others, has struggled to define the relationship between the activity of God in creation and God's self disclosure in the saving

acts of Israel's history. At one end is the affirmation that "in Israel's faith redemption was primary, creation secondary, not only in order of theological importance but also in order of appearance in the Israelite tradition" (p. 5). In creation God was affirmed as the lord of nature, but this came out of a concern to affirm that nature "was the servant of Yahweh's historical purpose" to save his people (p. 5). From this perspective creation is completely subordinated to salvation. Anderson continues to hold that this is true of the theological perspective represented in "Mosaic covenant theology." But from another perspective, the "royal theology" or "Davidic covenant theology," creation as God's "maintenance of cosmic and social order" was an integral and early part of Israelite theology (p. 82). Genesis 1 is particularly hard to locate in this analysis since it may be viewed from the perspective of its royal background in the liturgical setting of the Jerusalem temple or from its Mosaic position at the beginning of the epic of salvation.

This issue of the relationship of creation to salvation is associated with the question of what kind of literature we have in Genesis 1, and to some extent in all of the texts which talk about creation. Anderson is clear that this is not early science or philosophical speculation. It is the language of worship and affirmation. The affirmation that God is the Creator of the world is at the same time an affirmation that God is the Creator of the affirmer. Just as the confessor of faith in the Exodus from Egypt is to identify with those who were led out, to become one who confesses that God brought *us* out of bondage in Egypt, so the one who praises God as the Creator of heaven and earth is to praise God as the one "who created me and is my lord." But in both cases one still has an event, whether Exodus or creation, about which one is making some kind of affirmation. It still remains necessary to ask what is the relationship between what is being said in the affirmation and what is being said in speculative philosophy and science about creation. It would be unfair to try to summarize what in fact gets developed in some ways over the whole book, but it is fair to say that the biblical material about creation is concerned with a number of mysteries that it shares with the worlds of science and philosophy, the mysteries of why there is a cosmos and the relationships among the elements of this ordered cosmos, and the mystery of the nature of life within this cosmos (pp. 97-110). These are mysteries that both go back to the beginning of creation and touch on the very heart of what we ought to be today.

Finally, Anderson makes a major contribution to the question of how belief in creation impinges upon the life of the believer and the church today. Not

all ethical or ecological issues that humans face today are anticipated in the biblical texts in general or in the texts concerned with creation in particular. But the texts are in a larger context of the purposes of God that give guidance to where those who accept these texts as scripture ought to be going.

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Steck, Odil Hannes. *Old Testament Exegesis: A Guide to the Methodology*. Trans. James D. Nogalski. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995. Pp. xiii + 208. \$39.95/\$24.95.

There has been a decided interest in Old Testament methodology over the past few years, as the number of recent books on the topic suggests. Many of these books, including The Bible and Culture Collective's *The Postmodern Bible*, Gale Yee's *Judges and Method*, and J. Cheryl Exum and David J. A. Clines's *The New Literary Theory and the Hebrew Bible*, among others, deal with methodologies that range from rhetorical criticism to poststructuralist and ideological criticisms. Steck's book, however, does not seek to introduce methodologies that have come into use in the past twenty-five years, but to introduce a variety of methods employed in historical-critical exegesis.

This translation of the 13th revised edition of Steck's book (it was originally published twenty-five years ago by Steck and H. Barth, and the 12th edition was fully revised) seeks to enable readers to "determin[e] the original meaning of Old Testament transmissions." Such a determination is important for Steck; in his view, modern exegetes can only determine what the text says for Christians today by determining its original historical meaning during the time of its productive transmission. This is because Steck believes "the original meaning" of the text can be objectively determined by the modern exegete, and that this meaning must be "protected" from subjective, arbitrary reflections about the text made by the modern reader (Steck is clearly not a reader-response advocate!).

Steck has designed this book primarily for use in an academic setting, although people who want to review these historical-critical methods also will find the book useful. Each chapter describes the task of the method under consideration, then provides a discussion of its approach and method, the results the method seeks, and bibliographic information (for both German and English readers) pertinent to the method. Typographical changes are employed to indicate to the reader primary and secondary discussions in the

book (e.g., "small print" sections are less important than "large print" sections, and shaded sections tend to provide questions appropriate to the method under discussion that the exegete may want to ask of the text). In addition, practical advice is given from time to time (for example, the use of colored pens to note correspondences within and between sentences in a passage), and the use of concordances, lexicons, and other reference works during the exegetical process is encouraged.

Steck groups the methods he discusses synchronically (text criticism, literary [source] criticism, transmission historical criticism, and redaction criticism) and diachronically (form criticism, tradition history approach, and determining the historical setting). The former group, according to Steck, establishes the text and separates out the text's developmental stages, while the latter group addresses both how the text developed from an oral form to the text's existing final form and how each stage reflects the historical world in which it was produced. The last chapter is an exegesis of a passage, in which Steck employs each of the methods discussed in the book, something students who are new to these methods may find helpful.

Anyone who is studying historical-critical methodologies should find this book useful, whether they are studying these methodologies for the first time (in which case I would agree with Steck's advice that it be used in an academic setting), or are reviewing and deepening their familiarity with these methods. Combined with one of the books mentioned above that deals with methodologies that have come into use in Old Testament exegesis during the past twenty-five years (a combination that would also introduce a reader to the different presuppositions about texts, meaning, and the role of the reader that inform historical criticism and recent methodological approaches), a reader should be able to gain a broad introduction to the current state of Old Testament methodologies.

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Wolters, Al. *The Copper Scroll: Overview, Text and Translation*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996. Pp. 55 and 8 colored photographs. \$8.95.

Al Wolters is an acknowledged expert on the Copper Scroll, one of the most interesting of the Dead Sea Scrolls. It was written sometime in the latter half of the first century A.D. and purports to describe where a phenomenal

amount of gold, silver, and other treasures were hidden. Scholars have been divided on the meaning of the scroll; some think it is folklore (Milik, Harding, Silberman), others conclude it is an authentic record (Dupont-Sommer, Roth, Allegro). Given the expensive material on which it was written, the difficulty of inscribing Hebrew on the fine copper, the colorless listing of data ("like a book-keeper's ledger"), and the vast amount of wealth that flowed into the Jerusalem Temple each year, Wolters rightly judges that the document is trustworthy and does, in fact, describe where the Temple treasures were buried before the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

The booklet is full of valuable information, and the text attractively faces the translation (which is literal and careful). The text is an improvement over previous publications, but it is anachronistic to see Arabic numerals present in it; the method used in the scrolls should have been retained (as Milik did in *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, vol. 3.). Added to a reprint of this work should be the following: Like the Copper Scroll many of the Pesharim are autographs (p. 11); the supposition that the Qumran Community was wealthy just before A.D. 68 is certainly enhanced by the discovery of the J. Strange ostrakon, and that strengthens the position of Dupont-Sommer, Pixner, and Goransn (theory no. 1 on p. 16); the Copper Scroll was found in Cave III in a section separate from the scrolls probably related to the Qumran Community; and, the language of the Copper Scroll is not Qumranic—it is inelegant, unbiblical, and contains Greek transliterations. Readers need some guidance regarding the meaning of *signa et sigla* and why the first personal pronoun appears sometimes (3.9, 8.3, 11.9) in contrast to the usual third person discourse of the Copper Scroll. They also should have been told that the dual "Beth Eshdatain" in column 11 confirms the existence of two pools inside the Sheep Gate, which is not mentioned by Josephus or by other early chroniclers of Jerusalem, but only by the author of the Gospel According to John (5:2). Indeed it is strange that the most important aspect of this scroll for biblical scholars—topography—is not discussed.

At the end of lectures on the Dead Sea Scrolls in various churches, I am repeatedly asked for guidance to an inexpensive book, or pamphlet, on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Here is an attractive booklet focused on one scroll. I recommend it.

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Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. *Paul: A Critical Life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. Pp. xvi + 416. \$35.00.

Of the books I know that deal with Paul's life, this is by far the most detailed, the most carefully argued, and the most imaginative. The author, professor at the École Biblique in Jerusalem, has seemingly left no question unaddressed or, indeed, unanswered. In 370 pages he turns his vast scholarship to bear on issues that concern chronology, historical relationships, literary investigations, and theological interpretation.

The story begins with Paul's youth in Tarsus and then moves to Jerusalem, where Paul went to complete his education, lived for fifteen years, and became a Pharisee. In detail that it is not possible to note here, the author takes the reader through Paul's conversion and missionary journeys, encounters with churches and opponents (the author seems to find the "Judaizers" everywhere), and detailed explanations of what the letters are about and why. According to Murphy-O'Connor, Paul survived a first imprisonment in Rome, traveled then to Spain (for an abortive mission), returned to Illyricum (!), revisited some of his other foundations, and then traveled voluntarily to Rome to help strengthen the churches that had been ravaged by Nero's persecution. Eventually he also got caught in Nero's hostility toward Christians and was executed (c. 67–68 CE).

This is an amazing book. It is characterized by erudition and precision. The author professes to know *when* Paul was *where*. Every move is dated not only to year but to the part of year. He describes in detail the dynamic of Paul's encounters and seems to know exactly what happened. This is despite the fact that he uses Acts cautiously (if positively at times), thereby forcing more weight on the Pauline letters and his own logic. With regard to the letters he is aided by his conviction that 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, and 2 Timothy are authentic. Indeed, his reconstruction of the last years of Paul is largely dependent upon his exegesis of 2 Timothy, a letter that has long been discarded by most scholars into the deutero-Pauline bin.

Despite the detail and the imagination, Paul does not emerge from this book a very full-blown character; he is a stick figure of an organizational pragmatist. His decisions, thoughts, and feelings seem entirely caused by the success or failure of, or threats to, his mission activities. This characterization, however, mirrors exactly and highlights the interests of the source material. Neither Paul nor the author of Acts has any desire to note what the Apostle did with his leisure time. What *is* new in this twentieth-century portrayal (and

here Murphy-O'Connor is joined by many other contemporary scholars) is scepticism about the ideal picture given in the ancient texts.

The book is also stamped with an imaginative urge that leads beyond what can be said with any assurance. Murphy-O'Connor not only knows what happened; he knows the feelings and the motivations of the personages involved. He knows when Paul is angry or anxious (beyond what is explicitly stated in the letters). He reconstructs events based upon what he considers plausible motivations by the actors, but these motivations are often themselves constructions.

In my judgment the most delightful exercise in imagination concerns the fate of Paul's marriage. As a good Jew, he *had* to have married. Probably he did so during his fifteen years in Jerusalem. Probably he also had children. Why does Paul never mention them? Perhaps they were killed during some tragedy at Jerusalem. If so, "One part of his [Paul's] theology would lead him logically to ascribe blame to God, but this was forbidden by another part . . . , which prescribed complete submission to God's will. If his pain and anger could not be directed against God, it had to find another target" (p. 65). That other target was, of course, the Christians. It is this combination of a drive toward precision with creative imagination that, in my judgment, so often leads the author too far from the path defined by the sources.

Readers are, of course, free to agree or disagree with the creative attempts of Murphy-O'Connor. They *do* need to be on their guard. Without denying the impressive contributions of scholarship manifested in this volume, it may not be too far off the mark to describe it as somewhere between a scholarly work and a historical novel. If that is kept in mind, readers can profit from the great learning and be challenged by the imaginative reconstructions. They may indeed learn from Murphy-O'Connor to read the texts not as cold documents but as pointers to a vibrant and intense pivotal figure in the tumultuous dynamics out of which Christianity emerged.

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Dittes, James E. *Driven by Hope: Men and Meaning*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996. Pp. xv + 142. \$15.00.

Dittes, James E. *Men at Work: Life beyond the Office*. 2d ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996. Pp. 117. \$12.00.

What a long, strange trip the past decade has been for men. This journey is documented indirectly through two works of James Dittes, Professor of

Pastoral Theology and Psychology at Yale Divinity School. His *Men at Work*, first published in 1987, has been re-issued, while *Driven by Hope* is a new publication. Whereas the first book critiques typical problems and pathologies of men, especially their work-obsessed ways; the latest book takes a second look at these ways, defends them, and even dares to affirm men as men. The first book accommodates psychological, twelve-step, and feminist cries for men to be more vulnerable, interpersonal, nurturing, and involved with home and family; whereas the second seems more inspired by contrarian spirits in the Hillman-Bly-Paglia vein admiring the excesses and eccentricities of manhood.

Men at Work (Originally published as *When Work Goes Sour*) takes a long, careful look at the ways in which work and obsession with work among men often become a form of idolatry. And as idols tend to do, work has a way of pervading and styling all arenas of existence, not just the job. "Men take home 'working' as a style of life, as a posture, as a habit, as a script for home or family, as a way to do ham radio or gardening, church or lodge, Scouts or Little League, parenting kids or making love, jogging or even fishing." Also as idols do, this work posture offers the promise of salvation but never delivers; instead the work-idol intensifies the problem by creating the illusion that salvation will come if only one works even harder. Ultimately this can result in work itself going sour, and since men tend to stake so much meaning in work, all of life turns lifeless and meaningless.

The solution to this problem: conversion, changing men's attitude about work. Men are called to grieve the pain felt when life goes sour, then change the idolatrous center to a liberating one. In this case, work idolaters need to rediscover *play*. A playful attitude is less controlling, less driven, and energizes men to be good companions, colleagues, and friends. In the process a man may discover he is "more than a worker," and may find himself dancing like Zorba the Greek in joyful redemption.

A Freudian might say that *Men at Work* speaks to men driven by Superego and cut off from the vital, libidinous powers of Id. A Jungian might see the book speaking to men who have been dried out by public expectations and roles and who could benefit from the deep wellspring of soul. Dittes himself, in the new preface, looks back on this work as coming from a "prophetic posture," one railing against the false religion of workism. Men, in exile from the promised land, can cross the Jordan if they give up the weight of their idols.

When one compares the two books, one searches for such larger interpretative frameworks to make sense of the noticeable shift in tone, style, and

message *Driven by Hope* offers—a shift Dittes acknowledges. While men's relationship to work may stifle spirituality, says Dittes, it also discloses spiritual strengths. As *Men at Work* is largely a critique of men's work obsessions, albeit a very pastorally-mannered critique, *Driven by Hope*—more rough and rugged in style—looks at men in a generous spirit. In the shadowy madness of men's hungers, loneliness, restlessness, and conflicts is insight into transcendence, hope, wisdom, passionate love, and religious vocation. The often repeated refrain, "Is that all there is?" beats steadily throughout the book and reveals the double-edged lives of men. Keenly aware of the sorrows of existence, of being cut off from the promised land, perpetually in exile, men are left constantly wanting, with a chronic sense of incompleteness. On the other hand, "The hunger of *Is that all there is?* breeds the faith *There must be more.*" In short, the sense of life's incompleteness is the other side of being in touch with the *more*, with transcendence. This is why, for Dittes, men are inherently religious and not just "victims of testosterone overdose" or "morally defective" as he believes the new conventional wisdom might say.

A more concrete example: why won't men pull over and ask for directions? Conventional wisdom says it is because men need to be in control and cannot admit vulnerabilities or dependency. But Dittes sees something else at work here: an archetypal magi, a wise man. The magi found Christ only through the illumination of a star; and look what happened when they stopped to talk to Herod: "They unleashed the slaughter of innocents." Men's independence is the flip side of being driven by a deep, intuitive faith which trusts that the way will be found and that can live with the ambiguity of wandering in the process. Through the shadows of men's pathologies are powerful resources for passionate, meaningful religious existence.

Though Dittes never really says so, the overall strategy of the work seems inspired by the Jungian notion that "in the diseases are the gods," recently popularized by such archetypalists as James Hillman and Thomas Moore. It is a powerful strategy and the writing itself seems energized by the approach. By exploring the shadows of men's lives, Dittes discovers archetypal monarchs, magi, crusaders, pilgrims, sons, and underneath it all, *hope*.

The danger of the work (and this is true of the first book as well) is the ongoing problem of determining the point at which exploring general patterns in gender is genuinely helpful and at what point it crosses over into crass stereotyping that reduces the wonderfully wild and unpredictable nature of

human existence, male or female. But determining such a point is unlikely and should not inhibit writers and researchers from helping us all struggle with the issues by offering their best insights into the situation.

My hunch is that most readers will prefer one book to the other, depending upon one's view of men. If men are fundamentally problems, then the first book addresses and provides some liberating solutions. If men are fundamentally mysteries, then the second book explores those mysteries with passion and hope. How one man could write both books could be a bit unsettling—between them there are inconsistencies, conflicts, tensions, differing passions, and eccentric insights. Yet, as Dittes might say, that's men for you.

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Bons-Storm, Riet. *The Incredible Woman: Listening to Women's Silences in Pastoral Care and Counseling*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996. Pp. 164. \$16.95.

The work of Riet Bons-Storm may not be familiar to the American reader. Although this is her sixth book, it is her first written in English. As a professor of women's studies and pastoral theology at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, Bons-Storm has been very active with the Woman and Faith Movement there. It is out of these contexts that this book was written.

Bons-Storm's interests in the areas of women and theology and in pastoral counseling led her to conduct research on how women have experienced pastoral care and counseling from their pastors and pastoral counselors. She found that a large portion of women had experienced unsatisfactory pastoral care, primarily because the pastor was both resistant to and unable to understand the issues that the woman brought for help, and because the counselee was unable to find adequate language through which to convey (or trust) her own experiences. Bons-Storm suggests that the various disciplines that inform pastoral care (philosophy, psychology, and theology) are constructed via dominant and patriarchal narratives that narrow the possible lenses through which women can be viewed and through which women can construct their own personal narratives. Consequently, women who are experiencing problems in their lives, especially problems that arise due to conflict with "normal female roles," often have trouble being helped or even believed by their pastoral caregivers. Thus, women are "incredible" (not believed) in pastoral care.

Bons-Storm then systematically explores the dominant discourses of philosophy, psychology, and theology, especially in regard to their understanding of and prescriptions about gender. The main thesis being explored is that when women's lives vary from their prescribed and acceptable roles, there is little room in the dominant cultural narrative (through which pastors are informed) to see these experiences as believable or meaningful. The experiences remain "unstoried," that is, without language and support, and a woman may experience herself as either crazy or as not belonging as a result. Pastoral caregivers who cannot believe and support the woman's attempts to understand and give voice to her experience may well add to the problem.

After introducing several women's experiences through their own words, Bons-Storm proceeds to discuss in some detail, and from a postmodern perspective, issues of the power and the politics of dominant and marginalized discourses in the fields of philosophy, psychology, and theology. She makes some very helpful connections between the ways images of women and men have been generated and sustained in these different disciplines, and she carefully links her theoretical points with the particular women's stories introduced earlier. She covers a large amount of philosophical ground in relatively few pages, which is both a strength and a weakness of the book. The foundations for a postmodern analysis of these disciplines are given, but if the reader is unfamiliar with this methodology, she or he may be frustrated with the lack of full development of these ideas. Nonetheless, the complexities of the problems are carefully and systematically laid out, and connections are made to the actual provision of pastoral care for women.

The book ends with some specific recommendations for pastors, particularly the recommendation that they learn how to believe women's stories and to support and affirm the search for language and meaning within them. It is suggested that pastors learn to critique their place in the culture's dominant narrative so that they are better able to recognize the validity of experiences that challenge that narrative. Bons-Storm finishes with a look at the importance of, and difficulty with, empathy across gender differences and with the need to find new and positive narratives that will help provide models for women struggling to find voice.

It is important to note that the book focuses much more on the philosophical analyses underlying the failure of much traditional pastoral care than it does on the concrete ways that pastoral care might develop more helpful theories and practices. Despite this lack of practical focus, however, the book

is very thorough in its analysis and will provide a helpful "big picture," especially for those who have not done much reading in issues of feminist theology, psychology, and pastoral care.

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Davis, Patricia H. *Counseling Adolescent Girls*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996. Pp. 112. \$11.00.

In *Counseling Adolescent Girls*, Patricia Davis strives to make the growing pains of American teenage girls accessible to those who are in a position to offer them attention, affirmation, and guidance. Davis outlines the particular vulnerabilities of this population and prods parents and religious leaders to take the time to stop, listen to, and encourage their emerging voices.

Davis draws from a number of disciplines to expose the myriad dragons young girls must slay to survive—let alone to thrive—in contemporary society. Chief among these is the cultural stereotype that girls must maintain relationships and take care of others, often to the exclusion of self-care or self-assertion. Families frequently reinforce this gender stereotype and expect females to assume the primary domestic role. Such stereotypes inhibit girls from cultivating a broader range of gifts and abilities.

Girls face similar developmental constrictions at school. Davis cites current research as evidence that curriculum content and classroom attitudes continue to favor males. Too often school contexts reward girls for "compliance, selflessness, and silence" and fail to encourage them to "explore, achieve, and risk." Thus they tend to stumble and fall when attempting to step out into the larger, public domain.

In a society dominated by male values, Davis maintains that girls confront obstacles at many turns. Psychologically, they struggle to develop a positive sense of self and run the risk of adopting various negative identities. In ways different from their male counterparts, they face the daunting dilemma of *separating from* yet *staying connected* to their families of origin. Davis' own research shows that adolescent girls' spiritual development depends on their image of God. These images can be either a source of strength and healing or of oppression and inferiority. Physically, young girls are vulnerable to sexual violation both within and outside the home. In addition, many girls fear being weighed in the scales of standard beauty and found wanting, and develop eating disorders as a result.

Davis insists that the church, based on the life and ministry of Jesus, bears a counter-cultural call to resist gender stereotypes and to protect girls from these internal and external dangers. She challenges the church to be a place where the relational, nurturing work and values so often associated with women receive more respect. And she encourages men and women to expand upon their traditional roles, "to do each other's work." As Jesus ministered to Jairus' twelve-year-old daughter, so pastoral caregivers are to empower girls to stand and walk tall.

At the end of each chapter, Davis provides a set of guidelines and strategies for how caregivers can support young girls and their families, assess their level of risk, and determine when and where to make appropriate referrals. Her book serves as both provocateur and resource guide for those puzzling how to help faith communities more faithfully respond to young girls' need for safe places to grow, struggle, and flourish. The attention, respect, and fondness that Davis exhibits on behalf of young girls model for all readers the way to approach, learn from, and nurture this precious part of our community.

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Van Beek, Aart M. *Cross-Cultural Counseling*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996. Pp. 108. \$11.00.

As a Presbyterian minister teaching pastoral care and counseling at the Jakarta Theological Seminary in Jakarta, Indonesia, van Beek seeks to present a practical model of cross-cultural pastoral counseling. The practical model is built on a holistic understanding of human beings that includes culture, gender, socioeconomic, spiritual, and psychological factors.

The heart of van Beek's model surfaces as he examines case studies where there is an obvious cultural difference between the way the careseeker and caregiver view reality. The model places emphasis on the careseeker and caregiver finding common ground so that the holistic needs of the careseeker can be met. The responsibility of finding this common ground belongs to the caregiver.

"Identification" is the term van Beek finds useful to talk about transcending the gaps between the careseeker's and caregiver's view of reality. For him, identification refers to the careseeker seeing aspects of himself or herself in

the caregiver and vice versa. This provides a common ground for facilitating caregiving. In addition, the biblical story is a major vehicle for transcending cross-cultural gaps and facilitating common ground.

Van Beek's concept of identification grows out of his effort to move beyond cultural particularism, which has characteristically ignored the commonalities that exist between all human beings. He is not, however, settling for a naive universalism that is blind to the uniqueness of diverse cultures. For too long, the search for universals has contributed to the disparaging of the differences between cultures and making one culture superior to all others. Identification, the way van Beek uses it, neither trivializes the universal qualities of human beings nor the particular uniqueness of different cultures. In fact, he provides several theoretical perspectives that enable careseekers to take seriously cultural differences. These perspectives are interdisciplinary and include cultural models, psychological and personality models, social stratification theory, gender and role analysis, intergenerational studies, and cross-religious-tradition comparisons.

Closely associated with the interdisciplinary perspective, he talks about the skills for building common ground. These skills include attending, responding, language, hermeneutical, diagnosis, integrative, and methodical skills. Another important skill for the caregiver is the ability to assess the different worldviews of people from divergent cultural backgrounds. Van Beek's concern is to employ all of the skills, perspectives, and worldview analyses toward the end of building common ground.

While van Beek emphasizes the human effort to find common ground, I would also emphasize the role of the biblical story as facilitating common ground. It is the function of biblical narrative to help people transcend their limited cultural frames and to communicate across them.

I recommend this book as a practical guide to doing cross-cultural counseling.

Edward P. Wimberly
Interdenominational Theological Center

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Threat of Life: Sermons on Pain, Power, and Weakness*. Ed. Charles L. Campbell. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996. Pp. xi + 163. \$15.00.

The reader should beware that this book fulfills the promise of its title. Walter Brueggemann, Professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological

Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, has graced us with not just another collection of sermons. Brueggemann expressed himself homiletically at a theoretical level in 1989 when he published *Finally Comes the Poet*, but here we see the scholar-turned-preacher at work.

The sermons in this volume are presented in four groups: those that emerge from Torah texts, prophetic texts, texts from the writings, and New Testaments texts with Old Testament allusions. Through these sermons and the editorial work of Charles Campbell, Assistant Professor of Preaching at Columbia Seminary, we recognize the struggle that many preachers encounter of how to proclaim the word of God through the witness of the ancient Hebrew people, doing justice to their witness, while recognizing the christological lens through which Christians read.

Issues that are raised most overtly in Campbell's foreword, but are clearly evident in the sermons themselves, are how the preacher navigates the relationship of Old and New Testament scripture readings as they are suggested to us by the Revised Common Lectionary; if and when there must be a strong christological move in a sermon based on an Old Testament text; and, intertextual preaching when New Testament texts clearly refer to and are grounded in Old Testament texts.

So engaged was I in the issues raised in the foreword that I was unprepared for the power of the sermons themselves. This is no small gospel and no human-managed God proclaimed through these sermons. Brueggemann is unembarrassed and unapologetic about who God is and the way God works as witnessed in scripture. God's pursuit of humanity is as unmistakable as God's unwillingness to be manipulated by humanity's infantile whining and all-too-worldly waywardness. The sermons are thoroughly biblical and therefore thoroughly contemporary, as the best biblical preaching is.

Themes such as justice and economic politics, the struggle of people of biblical faith not to be enculturated into the world around them, the inclination of power to corrupt, our capacity to inflict pain on one another, and the need for taking radical responsibility can all be heard or overheard in these sermons. These themes are heard because they are heard in the scriptural texts on which the sermons are based, not because the preacher has a personal agenda about these particular topics.

Stylistically the sermons are more expository than poetic, if one considers poetry more commonly as verse with rhyme and meter. There is great coherence, however, between the voice of these sermons and the poetic

speech defined in Brueggemann's 1989 book, where he calls for "language that moves like Bob Gibson's fast ball, that jumps at the right moment, that breaks open old worlds with surprise, abrasion, and pace." This language lays bare the human condition, stirs in the hearer both an awareness of and a desire for the presence of God, and evokes faith.

The value of these sermons is not that the preacher found a text that was relevant to his people today, nor that he found a text that spoke of a needed topic for the day. These sermons speak because the Bible is relevant, because the God of the Bible is concerned with human life in every day and in every age, and because preaching that emerges faithfully from the biblical texts will address the most vexing problems and pain of being human.

Nancy Lammers Gross
Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Smith, J. Alfred, Sr., ed. *No Other Help I Know: Sermons on Prayer and Spirituality*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1996. Pp. xv + 100. \$10.00.

These uplifting and encouraging sermons, centered around the themes of prayer and spirituality, could serve to instruct and to delight a wide assortment of preachers across the country. The book, edited by J. Alfred Smith, pastor of Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland, California and Professor of Preaching and Christian Ministry at the American Baptist Seminary of the West, will be especially helpful to African American preachers since many in this tradition still learn to preach primarily through imitation of the masters. This collection, featuring some of the more gifted African American preachers on the scene today, is a welcome addition to the growing number of books on black preaching already filling the shelves.

However, I would like to challenge this cadre of gifted preachers to more intentional and deliberate reflection on the art and craft of preaching. Smith, a noted pastor and homiletician in his own right, could have strengthened this book with some analysis and critique of the contributors' sermons. As editor of this work, he had a responsibility to lend more than his name and reputation to such a preaching project. For example, what kinds of sermons do we have here with respect to form and structure? What theological convictions are driving the sermons? And how is the shape of the sermon affected when it begins in a concrete situation (as do many African American sermons) as opposed to a specific theological tradition? What is the implicit or explicit

worldview that informs and shapes the content of the sermons? What are the marks of a "good" African American sermon? And what criteria did Smith employ in selecting the preachers whose sermons are contained in the pages of this book?

While some of the sermons read well and have an easily grasped controlling thought and a clear function (e.g., those of Kevin Cosby, Douglas Haynes, and James Perkins), others are seriously deficient in originality and insightfulness. A sermon whose controlling thought is the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. is not necessarily edifying or instructive for the life of faith. Where are the sermons that focus on the redemptive purposes of God and bring people into the searchlight of that reality?

On the whole, the sermons can be categorized as run-of-the-mill, and there is little in them that diligent preachers could not gather on their own through serious and dedicated study. Surely preacher-homileticsians on the order of Smith, Charles Booth, Ella Mitchell, and Jeremiah Wright have more to offer the homiletical enterprise than sermon appetizers that have been lifted from the lineup of road sermons. If this is all the editor had in mind, an audio tape of the actual sermons would have done greater justice to this rich oral tradition than the cold, printed page of written sermons from popular preachers.

Cleo J. LaRue, Jr.
Princeton Theological Seminary

Eslinger, Richard L. *Pitfalls in Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996. Pp. xv + 152. \$12.00.

Richard Eslinger, whose primary role in contemporary homiletics has been to popularize the homiletical theories of several current homileticsians, has done it again. This time he has examined his favorite homileticsians—principally David Buttrick, Fred Craddock, and Eugene Lowry—with an eye for pitfalls into which unsuspecting preachers may stumble. According to Eslinger, these pitfalls exist largely because many preachers have lingering commitments to an older, discursive model of preaching (three points and a poem). Pitfalls are also caused by misunderstandings of what Eslinger calls the "new homiletic," a narrative- and imagination-based approach to preaching that Eslinger promotes in all of his writings.

In chapter 1, on "The Rhetoric of Preaching," Eslinger retools older advice on the use of adjectives, adverbs, imperatives, and questions in sermons. He

offers helpful suggestions for managing things brought into vogue by the new homiletic—notably pronoun shifts to the second person and the increased use of metaphors and images. In chapter 2 he analyzes pitfalls in biblical interpretation, such as taking texts out of context, psychologizing biblical characters, and permitting interpretation to be ruled by ideologies or secular worldviews. As an advocate of the new homiletic, he insists that the form of the biblical text should be taken as seriously as its thematic content in sermon preparation. Chapters 3 and 4, on method and illustration respectively, amount to a minicourse in David Buttrick's homiletic. Eslinger encourages a closer relationship between exegesis and sermon preparation, advocates episodic forms of logic, and insists on sermon sequencing instead of outlining. He follows Buttrick's lead by discouraging first-person intrusions into illustrations and by insisting on no more than one illustration per sermon "move." His final chapter, on context and delivery, invites a closer relationship between preaching and worship and a more dialogical and gender-specific form of delivery.

Pitfalls in Preaching will be helpful for anyone looking for the *Cliff Notes* to David Buttrick's *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (1987). A lot of Buttrick is in the book, including many of Buttrick's famous references to phantom research about what will and will not "form in consciousness." Something is lost in the translation, however, when several homileticians are thrown together into someone else's porridge. In this case, the broth is definitely Buttrick, and Lowry and others are more like spices randomly tossed in for flavor.

There are a few places where Eslinger's arguments are troubling or confusing. Serious exegetes will cringe as he attributes psychologization to historical-critical method. Tillich scholars will worry about his vast oversimplification of the ways that biblical authority is understood among those whom George Lindbeck calls "experiential expressivists." Throughout the book Eslinger seems to confuse phenomenological and cultural-linguistic models of language and narrative. We hear the names Craddock, Lowry, and Buttrick in the same breath that we hear Lindbeck, Frei, and Hauerwas. These are strange bedfellows indeed!

In spite of these concerns, there is much that is helpful in this book. It is well written. It contains a wealth of well-reasoned practical advice, written by someone with a real heart for Christian preaching. For a reader needing brief guidelines for updating homiletical practice, it provides a map through a wilderness of complicated material. It is worth having on the shelf for those

moments when the preacher needs a tour guide who will help him or her sidestep many serious homiletical pitfalls.

John S. McClure
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Adams, Harry Baker. *Preaching: The Burden and the Joy* St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1996. Pp. 168. \$16.99.

Contemporary writers on the preacher's craft are providing a much needed enthusiasm and direction to the homiletical field, especially those who have broadened their perspective to embrace related disciplines such as hermeneutics, pastoral care, social ethics, and so forth. Sales catalogues feature increasingly the names of preachers and teachers who are breakers of this new ground, featuring names such as Long, Craddock, Buttrick, Taylor, and Jacks.

Such is all to the good. However, an occasional title appears from the pen of a writer who gathers up the whole range of echoes from homiletical classics of yesteryear and tunes them afresh to become vital axioms to make today's pulpit more fully effective. Harry Baker Adams has done this and more in his new monograph, *Preaching: The Burden and the Joy*. Drawing upon a lifetime of homiletical and pastoral instruction at Yale Divinity School, he addresses with telling simplicity and clarity both the neophyte in a class on preaching and the pulpit veteran who feels he or she has arrived.

Basic to what Adams urges in the course of eight chapters is his own conviction that "from the very beginning the Christian community has been created, shaped, sustained and identified by the word proclaimed. Jesus was a preacher." Hence, every responsible preacher "stands in a noble heritage," and herein lies its "burden." A huge burden is placed "upon any frail human being," because upon him or her rests the serious obligation to speak "a word which will nurture and sustain the life of another," and such "calls forth every resource that a person can muster." Moreover, when the word of scripture becomes a word for the people now, they are "nurtured in their faith, sustained in their hope, and strengthened in their love." When such occurs, the preacher becomes "an instrument of the transforming Spirit of God," and for him or her it brings an experience of being "blessed with profound joy."

One of the stronger features of Adam's whole discussion is his realism. His preacher does not address a world through stained-glass media (he often draws illustrative references from Albert Camus), nor does he insert a

catalogue of new homiletical techniques or quick fixes. His basics lie in the preacher's sense of vocation, in the cumulative effect of attitudes, and the likely effect and impact when and where the gospel message is tried out and exercised.

No review can do justice to this splendid volume. It brings together mature thinking and judgments drawn from decades of reflection upon the why? the what? and the how? of the highest of the Christian callings. "Sermons are about the relationship between God and the people. They change people when God comes to them in the words spoken and the experience shared."

Donald Macleod
Princeton Theological Seminary

Childers, Jana L., and Lucy A. Rose, eds. *The Abingdon Women's Preaching Annual*. Vol 1, *Year B*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996. Pp. 159. \$16.95.

Jana Childers from San Francisco Theological Seminary and the late Lucy Rose from Columbia Theological Seminary compiled this collection of sermons written and preached by women. This lectionary-driven sermon anthology includes contributions from fifteen preachers representing seven traditions. The selections take us through lectionary year B in an intermittent fashion, addressing texts for twenty-eight out of the fifty-two Sundays in the church year. The stated intention of the editors is not to demonstrate certain gender-based variables in preaching. Rather, what the editors hope is that readers of the volume will undergo their own individual, inductive exercises; their hope is that readers will read and evaluate in broad stroke the "perhaps distinctive" woman word. Spurred by the increasing number of women filling pulpits, the volume provides a resource for those anxious to experience and learn from those who are newly finding their places in the homiletic arena.

While the sermon briefs are short and while arguably they vary in both content and quality, readers are allowed a substantial enough glimpse into the preacher's process. Readers are often able to discern the question or image that took hold of the preacher and became the sermon's formative seed. Through the subtleties of language and image, we come to know not only something of the biblical passage, but also something about the preacher's own understanding of preaching, of community, and of the biblical text.

While each sermon brief is distinctive, the careful reader will notice several threads of commonality shared by many, though not all, of these sermons.

Often the sermons call upon language related to labor, childbirth, motherhood, and family life to demonstrate both the struggle and the God-given hope with which we live. There is also a consistent drive toward recovering female figures, both ancient and contemporary, to make them visible to the community of readers. Finally, there are new christologies and frequent attempts to scrutinize texts for any oppressive tendency toward women.

With each sermon brief, the preacher provides some reflections upon the text (often reflections on the preacher's struggle with the text or the occasion) and worship helps—calls to worship, litanies, prayers, and benedictions. When these resources are created by the preacher, they often provide models for the creative and insightful formation of liturgy. When these worship helps are borrowed, they direct the reader to important liturgical resources. Both approaches are valuable and can be used as devotional material for preachers and laity alike.

While there is much of value in this volume, students of preaching would profit considerably from additional information about both preacher and the contexts and communities for which these sermons were written. This information would be invaluable in our struggle to understand how the preacher forms a word that arises from a biblical text and speaks to a specific people, time, and place.

Mary Donovan Turner
Pacific School of Religion

Lawrence, William B. *Sundays in New York: Pulpit Theology at the Crest of the Protestant Mainstream, 1930–1955*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1996. Pp. x + 410. \$49.50.

“Where are the Fosdicks and Sockmans of today?” That this question is still asked testifies to the enduring contribution of the “pulpit giants” of mid-twentieth-century America. In *Sundays in New York*, William B. Lawrence, Professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry and Associate Director of the J. M. Ormond Center for Research, Planning and Development at Duke University Divinity School, considers four of those giants who preached in New York City: Harry Emerson Fosdick at Riverside; Ralph W. Sockman at Christ Church, Methodist; Paul Scherer at Holy Trinity Lutheran; and George Arthur Buttrick at Madison Avenue Presbyterian. The author looks at the era in which they preached, discusses their understanding of pulpit

theology, assesses sermons, and concludes that with all their “notoriety” these famous preachers failed to communicate Protestant theology and thereby contributed to the crash of the mainstream church.

We need not agree with this conclusion to find merit in the author’s work. Lawrence’s major point, that the pulpit is the arena for serious theological work, has never been more timely than today when theology is in danger of being reduced to an occasional quote from a sermon service rather than a formative as well as substantive factor.

Lawrence’s description of his subjects and their settings is fascinating. To those who grew up admiring these preachers he offers behind-the-scenes glimpses that enrich our understanding. Questions arise, however, around the author’s criteria for theological judgments: the fundamentals of Protestant theology. He devotes little more than two pages to establish what he means by these criteria, providing brief sketches of justification by faith, *sola scriptura*, and freedom only through faith in Christ (pp. 27–29). While granting the author the primacy of the Reformed point of view, we may well question his interpretation of it. He quotes Heiko Oberman, for example, as a source and yet ignores Oberman’s view of the significance of the doctrine of justification by faith, for the task of proclamation, namely, that through the Holy Spirit Jesus Christ is present in preaching. The larger question is whether the Protestant Reformed perspective—as important as it is—should be the sole criterion for the theological validity of preaching.

Lawrence holds that Scherer and Buttrick were thoroughly Protestant in their preaching but Fosdick and Sockman only “tangentially” so. Yet they all contributed to the collapse of Protestantism, for even Scherer and Buttrick lost their grip. Protestant theology was abandoned and lost in consent to the American way of life. The closing line of the book reads: “And the truth of the Reformation could scarcely be heard amid the cacophony of noisy gongs and clanging cymbals.”

This conclusion is not adequately supported by Lawrence’s study or by the larger picture. While the preachers under discussion indeed contributed to the crest and the crash of Protestantism at mid-century, they were also at the center of a valiant enterprise to relate the Christian faith to their congregations and country amid the tumult of the Great Depression, World War II, the atomic bomb, and other vast social changes. That through their preaching the Protestant message could be heard at all was a colossal achievement. Much is still to be learned from these pulpit giants. This work is a corrective to the

near idolatry these preachers received from devotees but runs the risk of demoting them too harshly on too narrow a principle.

Sundays in New York deals with major issues in an engaging way and offers practical insights. It does not go far enough in establishing its criteria, and it goes astray in its major conclusion. Even so, it goes a long way toward showing the importance of the vital union of theology and preaching.

David James Randolph
United Methodist Church
Babylon, NY

Jacks, G. Robert. *Just Say the Word!: Writing for the Ear*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996. Pp. 195. \$20.00.

If you are looking for another weighty treatise on the subject of teaching or preaching to add luster to your library shelf, you will be sorely disappointed with Robert Jacks' *Just Say the Word!: Writing for the Ear*. You will find here, instead, a book too provocatively playful and painfully pointed to be filed away. You will want to keep it near you for frequent counsel when composing future messages. You will wish to make it required reading for others. You will probably *never* admit to a clergy luncheon crowd that this book has influenced you, but it may do more good for your ministry among children, youth, or adults than anything else you'll read this year.

The book's central aim is to help teachers and preachers move from writing well *for the way people read* to writing wonderfully *for the way people hear*. Exposing the dramatic differences between typical writing and normal speech, Jacks seeks to give us grace to escape the prison of literary formalism constructed for us by countless writing teachers through the years. As the title suggests, the author begins with a deep confidence in the Word's intrinsic power, and a genuine—even sympathetic—understanding of the diverse ways the teacher or preacher gets in the way of the text she or he is seeking to open to listeners. You may be embarrassed at how frequently you find yourself on the wrong side of Jacks' examples; but you will be even more delighted by how helpfully he shows you a way out.

The genius of this book is its relevance and practicality for work in the church. It is the excellent seminary practicum you wish you'd paid more attention to when you were there, or the communication coach you wish you could hire confidentially now that you're where you are. Each of the book's

short, focused chapters is packed with meaty ideas, witty examples, and dozens of “you’ll-be-glad-you-did-them” exercises. Key points are repeated often enough to stick in your mind. The two chapters the author devotes to the art of story-telling are an extraordinary resource in themselves.

Throughout, Jacks doesn’t simply remind us of the simple tools that help us establish a communion of trust and a companionship of discovery with our listeners; he employs them himself. The author’s style may be initially jarring to those accustomed to wading through ponderous academic works. The ultimate effect, however, is to leave you feeling like you’ve just enjoyed a life-giving conversation with a treasured friend. Jacks both makes and models the sort of intimate and instructional connection with a listener that every communicator seeks with his or her audience.

The book would be worth the purchase price alone for the well-chosen texts and inspiring prayers with which the author begins each chapter. These mini-devotions not only illuminate the Word’s own reflection on the nature of good preaching and teaching, but also help to restart in us that yearning for intimacy with God and that longing for faithfulness to God’s calling that form the rhythm of the heartbeat of great proclamation.

Rather than trying to force us into a uniform mold as some instructors of communication “technique” tend to do, Jacks works with the refreshing premise that God knew what he was doing when he made each of us the way he did. He, therefore, pushes us to discover the unique shape each of us has—the sense of irony, suspicion, rebellion, and wonder—that helps form the distinctive lens through which God’s Light would shine into our listeners’ hearts. In sum, if you’ve ever wondered—“What is it about that person’s way of speaking that’s so powerfully connected with me? And how can I learn to do the same with others, but in my own way?”—this book is written for you.

Daniel D. Meyer
Christ Church of Oak Brook

Smith, Donald P. *Empowering Ministry: Ways to Grow in Effectiveness*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996. Pp. xi + 227. \$21.99.

Donald P. Smith’s latest book is the third of a series of publications resulting from his extensive research relating to congregational ministry. Hypotheses based on his observations of effective pastors in his first two

volumes, *Congregations Alive* and *How to Attract and Keep Active Church Members*, were tested against the self-assessments of 461 Presbyterian pastors who responded to a nine-page questionnaire, and against the pastoral evaluations of 833 randomly selected lay leaders in their congregations who responded to a similar but shorter form.

While he acknowledges the difficulty of defining what constitutes pastoral effectiveness, Smith's analysis of the massive data collected led him to the conclusion that the one criterion that seemed to touch most universally upon all other measures was the pastors' focus on empowering others. Pastors who rated themselves high in this skill, which is defined as "the ability to establish a climate in which people feel free to grow, learn, explore, and use their gifts in Christian ministry without fear of retribution" (p. v), rated themselves higher than "other pastors" in regard to almost all other measures of effectiveness.

Information drawn from the questionnaires was supplemented by personal interviews with many of the respondents. The book is replete with quotations excerpted from written comments on the survey forms as well as from the interviews. Pastors will find their own ministries confirmed or challenged by the respondents, whose confidentiality has been protected throughout the book by the use of fictitious names for individuals and their churches.

The book begins appropriately with a discussion in chapter 1 of why empowering is important and how it relates to other dimensions of ministry. Ministry empowers when it helps people in their quest for meaning (chapter 2), when it creates a climate in which people are loved, accepted, listened to, affirmed, and encouraged to be all that God wants them to be (chapter 3), and when the pastor exercises a servant-leadership style, sharing power and working for collegiality (chapter 4).

A discussion of the personal characteristics of empowering pastors, their maturity, and the basis of their self-esteem (chapter 5) is followed by a collective look at early faith foundations, educational development from high school on, including continuing education, and patterns of spiritual development (chapter 6).

Fifteen skills of empowering pastors are identified and grouped into three categories: leadership in mission achievement, responsiveness to others, and energizing and facilitating skills (chapter 7). The skills and their interrelatedness are examined more fully in the next two chapters, in which the author rightfully concludes that "people skills are the bedrock of pastoral effectiveness" (p. 138).

Pastors will especially appreciate the author's treatment of stress and ministerial burnout, to which empowering pastors are by no means immune (chapter 10). This is followed in chapter 11 by what Smith calls "three secrets of sustaining power," including having a deep sense of call, depending on the power of the Holy Spirit, and cultivating "a strong network of personal, spiritual, and professional support" (p. 170).

The focus of these last two chapters, notwithstanding, up to this point the book is more descriptive than prescriptive. The final chapter identifies four necessary tasks and outlines some specific, practical steps needed to accomplish each task in achieving a more effective and empowering ministry. Some very helpful exercises are provided for confirming one's call to ministry and for identifying and evaluating personal beliefs, values, levels of self-esteem, sources of stress, ministerial style and effectiveness, formative experiences, skills, conflict-management style, spiritual and professional disciplines, pattern of continuing education; and sources of support.

As the retired General Director of the Vocation Agency of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., Donald Smith has a broad understanding of pastors and their congregations, and he writes about them with sensitivity and empathy. He has provided another useful resource for Presbyterian pastors in particular, but one which can be used by other clergy as well.

Richard Stoll Armstrong
Princeton Theological Seminary

Armstrong, Richard Stoll. *Now, That's a Miracle!: Reflections on Faith and Life*. Lima, OH: CSS Publishing Co., 1996. Pp. 106. \$9.25.

Here is the verse of a man with passion. Richard Armstrong has written forty-eight poems that address an important theme: how we all seek to live life faithfully. Armstrong is the Ralph B. and Helen S. Ashenfelter Professor of Ministry and Evangelism Emeritus at Princeton Theological Seminary. He was in the Navy in World War II, a minor league baseball player, a major league public relations director, an advertising copy chief, a radio broadcaster, a television program director, a development officer, a journal editor, a teacher, a coach, and a pastor. He brings his varied background to these poems, which arise from a grounded Christian faith.

Christianity Is . . .
not a philosophy
to be discussed
but a message
to be proclaimed,
which calls
not for comment
about an idea
but for commitment
to a cause. . . .

Such affirmations are helpful for devotional readings or for quoting at church meetings and even in sermons. The sharp edges of Armstrong's questing spirit cause us to ponder, wrestle, and seek our own path to Christian faith.

Armstrong's playful use of words can amuse as well as lead us to deeper issues. For instance, from "The Real Me":

The 'me' others know is not the real me;
nor is it the 'me' I want them to see.
I'm not what I seem. Yet is it not true,
that masquerade 'me' is part of me, too?

This reminds me of Bonhoeffer's musing "Who Am I?"

Armstrong comes around again and again to a Christ-centered faith, telling in simple ways about the God he has come to know in Jesus. This knowledge shapes Armstrong's life and his engagement with the world. He has a vital, vibrant faith, a thinking faith with passion. In his poems Armstrong balances the qualities of the heart and head. The reader will come back to them often.

Alan Johnson
Saugatuck Congregational Church
Westport, CT

Jones, Alan W. *The Soul's Journey: Exploring the Three Passages of the Spiritual Life with Dante as a Guide*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995. Pp. 243. \$18.00.

Alan W. Jones has undertaken a project of singular promise in *The Soul's Journey*. Dean of San Francisco's Grace Cathedral (Episcopal), Jones is a son-in-law of the renowned novelist and poet Madeleine L'Engle. Straightforward about the purpose of his book, he does not pretend to contribute to serious, academic research on the thirteenth-century Italian poet. Rather, he says, he wrote the book as "an antidote to both biblical and psychological 'fundamentalism,' and as a way of honoring all the levels of human experience inside me that demanded attention."

Sometimes, it is difficult to know whether one should consider Jones' work theology, literary criticism, or psychology. In fact, it plays at the margins of each of these domains. While his approach shows the considerable influence of Jungian psychology, he also commands a good grasp of the literature *as* literature (including the Italian verse, which he quotes with translation). Theologically, the book offers something really intriguing in the working definitions it puts forth for the categories of hell, purgatory, and heaven. Initially, he characterizes these in essentially existential terms. Hell is the "depressingly downward spiral of hopelessness." Purgatory is "the possibility of making a fresh start," while our occasional glimpses of what it would be to be a truly "free person in a free society" form his picture of heaven. As the text unfolds, Jones adds considerable theological weight to each of these categories. Hell is seen not so much as judgment as a human choice to remain stuck in the tracks of money, sex, or power. Purgatory is "the liberating mountain where we choose the possibility of freedom and conversion," and heaven is "the place where we choose to enjoy God's love."

These characterizations derive not so much from the text as from Jones' very personal experience of it. Naturally, such a subjective reading will seem to some to be an uncomfortable stretch from Dante's original vision. *The Divine Comedy*, after all, remains rooted essentially in the Medieval experience of western Europe. As such, it is arguably not so much a celebration of the individual psyche as a study of the individual's personal response and accountability to the twin pillars of church and empire, under the dominion of God.

Almost every page of this volume is laden with the stupendous trove of Jones' wide-ranging cultural literacy. Its interdisciplinary format and intensely personal style do make the book vulnerable to the criticism that it does

not quite qualify as a serious contender in any particular specialty. Yet, the book's exhaustive quotations and stories commend it to preachers. For those who have read some of Jones' earlier works (*Soul Making, Passion for Pilgrimage, Sacrifice and Delight*), the present volume offers a welcome expansion of some of their most worthwhile themes.

Edward F. Duffy
First Congregational Church
Litchfield, CT

Stookey, Laurence Hull. *Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996. Pp. 189. \$15.95.

This is the third volume of a trilogy on Christian liturgy by Laurence Stookey, Professor of Preaching and Worship at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C. The earlier volumes in the series—*Baptism: Christ's Act in the Church* (1982) and *Eucharist: Christ's Feast With The Church* (1993)—sought to bring together for the benefit of a wide audience the fruits of recent liturgical scholarship on Christian initiation and eucharist. Though synthetic in intent, those volumes were not without the author's own thoughtful contribution to each subject. This third volume promises to be less a synthetic reworking of recent scholarship—though in many ways it is that—and more of a contribution toward a theology of liturgical time for the Christian community. To a large extent, the work succeeds.

The opening chapter—"Living at the Intersection of Time and Eternity"—is as fine an introduction to the theological dimensions of sacred time as exists for a broad audience of nonspecialists. Parish clergy will find it provides a solid theological grounding to sustain their own teaching and preaching, and many laity will be enriched by the clear, engaging explanations of what can be difficult concepts. Stookey uses examples of shifting verb tenses in familiar hymns to illustrate his understanding of *anamnesis* and *prolepsis*. The pastoral use of Stookey's examples will be endless.

In the following chapters, Stookey moves through the liturgical year, not in the order of its celebration, but properly from resurrection to birth. The discussion of Sunday captures well the eschatological emphasis at the heart of that day's resurrection proclamation and provides one of the more accessible expositions of the concept of the "eighth day." Preachers who follow *The Revised Common Lectionary* or another similar to it will find useful material in Stookey's Sunday-by-Sunday move through the Great Fifty Days of Easter.

Although Stookey's command of the literature on sacred time and the history of the liturgical year is impressive, and abundantly available to the reader in the endnotes, the real emphasis in this volume is what I would call a pastoral theology of liturgical time. Stookey is clearly less concerned with the origins of a particular day, theme, or season, and more interested in the theological content that gives meaning through time, in time, for time. His ultimate concern is clearly the praying, worshiping community gathered for proclamation and sacraments. This is mature scholarship in practical service to the church at prayer. Those interested in the hard-core historical details of the church's articulation of liturgical time might well look elsewhere or, better yet, begin their journey in Stookey's notes and suggestions for further reading. Those who want an excellent point of entry into "the meaning of these things" could hardly find a better place to start.

J. Neil Alexander
University of the South

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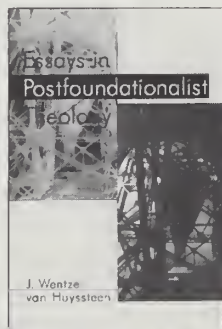
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